DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 416 969 PS 026 213

AUTHOR	Lalley, Jacqueline, Ed.
TITLE	Family Support and Community Economic Development.
INSTITUTION	Family Resource Coalition, Chicago, IL.; National Resource Center for Family Centered Practice, Iowa City, IA.
SPONS AGENCY	Administration for Children, Youth and Families, Washington, DC. Children's Bureau.; Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Princeton, NJ.
PUB DATE	1997-00-00
NOTE	49p.
CONTRACT	90-CW-1084/01
AVAILABLE FROM	Family Resource Coalition, 20 North Wacker Drive, Suite 1100, Chicago, IL 60606; phone: 312-338-0900; fax: 312-338-1522; e-mail: frca@frca.org
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - Serials (022)
JOURNAL CIT	Family Resource Coalition of America Report; v16 n3 Fall 1997
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Community Action; Community Change; *Community Development; *Community Resources; Economic Change; *Economic Development; Economic Impact; Family Needs; *Family Programs; *Family (Sociological Unit); Quality of Life; Welfare Services
IDENTIFIERS	Community Empowerment; *Community Resource Development; *Family Support

ABSTRACT

This report of the Family Resource Coalition of America examines the interrelationship of sustainable community economic strategies and sustainable family units. The introductory section of the report consists of one article, "Integrating Community Development and Family Support." The second section, "Community Building: A Movement is Afoot," consists of five articles addressing community rebuilding, community building theories, community building practice, and building on Chicago's West Side. The third section, "Supporting Families from Welfare to Work," contains six articles describing new ways of working, California family economic security programs, job training, the Cleveland Works program, and microenterprises. The fourth section, "Community-Based Strategies for Financing," consists of five articles addressing the concept of time dollars, community-based financing, grassroots loans, youth credit union, and partners in community-based lending. The fifth section, "Building Rural Economy and Community," contains two articles describing a skill and value education program on a farm, and the "MIHOW" (Maternal and Infant Health Outreach Workers) program. The sixth section, "Housing-Based Strategies," contains three articles discussing housing-based community development and presenting case studies of the Omaha Housing Authority the Fremont County (Colorado) Family Center. The seventh section, "Federal Innovations," consists of one article describing Federal Economic Development Initiatives. The report includes a program survey and resource file. (SD)

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report

FALL 1997 Volume 16, Number 3

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Acknowledgments

FRCA thanks the many people who generously shared their ideas and experiences to create this far-reaching resource on community economic development and family support. Program staff, policymakers, researchers, parents, and other innovators across the nation were willing to be interviewed and wrote articles themselves so that readers in these two ever-merging fields could benefit from the lessons they have learned and are learning. This *Report* would not exist without their efforts.

This *Report* was produced in part by the National Resource Center for Family Centered Practice, funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children, Youth, and Families, Children's Bureau—cooperative agreement number 90-CW-1084/01 under contract with the University of Iowa School of Social Work. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the funders, nor does the mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Preparation of this issue of FRCA *Report* also was assisted by a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (Princeton, New Jersey), sponsor of the STATES (State Technical Assistance and Training for Effective Systems) Initiative of FRCA.

Cover Photo

Focus: Hope, a Detroit community economic development initiative, has been holding its eight-mile Walk for Justice every year since 1968; community members take part in the walk to demonstrate their commitment to interracial harmony. Focus: Hope was founded to undertake "intelligent and practical action to overcome racism, poverty, and injustice, and to build a metropolitan community." Today, with government, corporate, and foundation support, Focus: Hope employs more than 850 people and involves more than 47,000 volunteers, contributors, and participants. It operates for-profit manufacturing companies that provide training and employment (pictured here), and also links with universities to provide training and education. Focus: Hope's preschool provides quality education and care for the children of participants.

This photo and others are part of a nationwide photo exhibit tour and public education campaign, Pursuing the Dream: What Helps Children and Their Families Succeed. The campaign began this fall with publication of a photo book that shows community-based programs in action, and is a collaboration among FRCA, award-winning photographer Stephen Shames, and Aperture Foundation. For information on how to get involved or bring the exhibit to your community, contact FRCA.

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FRCA *REPORT*

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Printer: BOOKLET PUBLISHING

Family Resource Coalition of America is a membership, consulting, and advocacy organization that has been advancing the movement to strengthen and support families since 1981. The family support movement and FRCA seek to strengthen and empower families and communities so that they can foster the optimal development of children, youth, and adult family members. FRCA builds networks, produces resources, advocates for public policy, provides consulting services, and gathers knowledge to help the family support movement grow. For information or to become a member, contact FRCA at 20 N. Wacker Drive, Suite 1100, Chicago, IL 60606, 312/338-0900 (phone), 312/338-1522 (fax), frca@frca.org (e-mail).

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The opinions expressed in the FRCA *Report* are those of the authors; the *Report* strives to include a variety of perspectives from the family support field.

The *FRCA Report* is published quarterly in the public interest by the Family Resource Coalition of America, a tax-exempt, nonprofit organization. Membership in the Coalition includes a subscription to the FRCA *Report*. Readers are encouraged to copy and share its content; we ask you to credit the Family Resource Coalition of America as the original source of information.

In This Issue

Increasing numbers of family support programs nationwide are working to assist families and communities in becoming economically stable and self-sufficient. And professionals in community economic development are combining their efforts with family support. Professionals in these fields, and community members themselves, know firsthand that no single strategy can respond sufficiently to the wide range of needs of children, families, and communities.

Still, many family support programs are new to welfare-to-work and economic development activities, and are asking what they can do to help families and communities achieve stability and self-sufficiency. And family support services in the economic development arena still are rare; many of these professionals are seeking ways to work in a more holistic, family-supportive way.

This *Report* is one of many steps in FRCA's long-term plan to bring the lessons of community economic development into the service system reform and family support movements. These principles, strategies, history, and philosophies offer tremendous potential for realizing the family support vision, particularly in improving physical and economic conditions for families and communities. FRCA is beginning a major effort to institutionalize the notion that disinvested communities cannot transform themselves unless professionals in economic development and family support and local residents work together toward a common vision.

FRCA's new partnerships with national organizations with expertise in community building and community economic development will result in resources that blur the formerly rigid lines between community economic development and family support. The resulting coalitions will strengthen FRCA's ability to assist local programs, government agencies, and others with strategies to help families and communities access economic opportunity.

—Mark McDaniel
Community Economic Development Specialist
FRCA

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Integrating Community Development and Family Support—

The Practice, the Challenge, the Possibilities

by Kirk E. Harris

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Marshall Heights Community Development Organization in Washington, D.C., covers a whole ward of the city. It owns 40 percent of a shopping area and uses the profits to run a small business incubator with a loan fund to help small start-up businesses. Michael Morton (left), Manager, Business Development Services talks to Archie Alston, a small businessman who owns Alston Sea Food, a popular take-out restaurant. MHCDO has helped him expand his business by offering technical assistance and a loan.

While practitioners of community economic development often lament the difficulty of achieving sustainable project outcomes given the forces that often work to destabilize communities, an element that gets only passing, if any, attention in their discussions is the very infrastructure upon which sustainable community economic strategies must rest: sustainable family units. Conversely, family support practitioners often ignore issues related to the economic and physical infrastructure of communities, going about their work as if they could adequately address the crises and/or needs of families in the absence of a transformation of the economic and physical conditions under which families live.

The hope of enhancing family life and increasing the stability of family units is a challenging one. Changes in the economic environment, welfare policy, and available community resources increasingly require families to defy the odds if they are to realize a healthy and sustainable existence. We must ensure that our community economic development strategies both are supportive of families and respond to the economic inequality, racism, and class-bias that are undermining family and community integrity. And our strategies must spring from the knowledge that parents' ability to support their children and their communities is as dependent on governmental and corporate decision-making as on parents' will and commitment.

Economic Trends and Families

Family and community stability is greatly affected by the globalization of the economy and choices that are made in the corporate boardroom, where decision making is inordinately focused on profit and little attention is paid to the stability of families. Workers today are working more hours for relatively less pay than they were 30 years ago. The proliferation of low-wage, temporary employment without benefits has increased employment instability among families dramatically, and low-income families have been particularly hard-hit.

The need to work harder and longer for relatively less income has had a decidedly negative impact on families and communities, and has compromised the quality of public and private life significantly. People have little time to devote to their families and little or no time to devote to civic engagement. This greatly challenges the sustainability of family and community life. If individuals are unable to make personal and social investments in their families and communities, investments of capital to support community development efforts will be futile.

Social Welfare Policy

Recent changes in social welfare policy are demonstrating strong effects on families, and thus have critical relevance to the sustainability of communities. The Federal Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996 has abolished the guaranteed income supports for low-income families formerly provided by Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). It also eliminated the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) training program—which provided basic education, skills training, and work opportunities to low-income families—and the Emergency Assistance to Families with Children program, which provided emergency help to families with children for up to one month per year. These programs have been replaced by Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) but at a considerably lower level of funding, which states receive as block grants to be used as they deem appropriate.

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TANF potentially challenges the sustainability of low-income families in the following ways:

Within two years of receiving aid, every individual must be participating in work-related activities. Generally, education and/or training activities do not satisfy this requirement. Interestingly, while TANF does not require states to increase the number of jobs available to low-income individuals, people who fail to meet the work requirement risk loss of public assistance including Medicare.

Childcare assistance is no longer guaranteed to parents who require it in order to participate in work or training.

Parents of newborns enrolled in school or in a training program must return to work when the newborn reaches 12 weeks old.

Individuals are eligible to receive public assistance for only five years throughout their lives, irrespective of the availability of jobs that pay a "living wage."

Food stamps will be cut by $28 billion over six years, and more than half of this cut will be absorbed by families with incomes less than half of a poverty-line income. Food subsidies for the unemployed, the childless poor, and the nondisabled poor between the ages of 18 and 50 are restricted to three months in any 36-month period.

Approximately 300,000 children who are classified as disabled under Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or who receive Medicaid will become ineligible for these benefits.

According to the Urban Institute, these reforms will push more than 2.6 million people, including 1.1 million children, into poverty.

Additionally, PRWORA compartmentalizes supports for individual members of the family in a way that may undermine the mutuality of support and interdependence within families. For example, it extends supports and services to mothers and children that it denies to needy men who are often the fathers of children receiving public assistance and who would be in a better position to financially and emotionally provide for their children if they were to receive support.

We are confronted with a genuine contradiction. On the one hand, our social policy and economic structures compromise the integrity of families and communities, and on the other hand there is a social mandate for individuals to be more responsible and self-reliant and for communities to be more self-sustaining. Community development and family support practitioners must recognize this contradiction and make it a vital part of the public debate. It is not sufficient, and could even be destructive to continue working under the conditions imposed by this contradiction without offering a strident critique of it. The risk is that if family support and community development practitioners accommodate the contradiction in order to carry on with their work as best they can, government and large corporations will be insulated from the consequences of their policies, giving them the opportunity to rationalize away destructive forces at work on families that they have in large part created or maintain.

Photo courtesy MIHOW

Community Resources

The work of community economic development and family support practitioners is mutually reinforcing, but practitioners often do not see it that way, and foundations do not fund it that way. The dichotomy of physical and economic development versus social service provision and family support has created artificial disciplinary boundaries and competition for resources that undermine the strengths that each group of practitioners brings to the effort of building sustainable communities.

If physical and economic development is the hardware that defines the set of opportunities within a community, the social service and family support activities are the software that makes it run. Thus, the challenge is to find ways to form strategic alliances that will foster the creation of a more holistic vision of community and encourage comprehensive responses to community needs that are unrestricted by disciplinary boundaries and narrow funding prerogatives. Family support practitioners and community economic development practitioners should join forces to become stronger and more united advocates for the community and for each other.

Kirk Harris, J.D., Ph.D., former Director of the Center for Fathers, Families, and Public Policy, has joined the staff of FRCA as Senior Policy Advisor and General Counsel.

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Welfare Reform Calls for Bold New Ways of Working with Families

by Connie Bosse

After much talk and anticipation, welfare reform is upon us. There is no doubt that we will face difficult times ahead. As family support workers, we often witness the struggle of working poor families. We know that these families sometimes work miracles, surviving on very small budgets. Many of the children of these families have inadequate health care, stay home alone because their parents cannot afford childcare, and too often go to school hungry. Under the reforms these families and their children will suffer, and it will be difficult for the workers concerned with their well-being to see their pain. Ultimately, the work of responding to the needs of families and children must embrace all groups and individuals, but this work can begin with the field of family support.

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Through Cooperative Home Care Associates, in New York, N.Y., Ana Cuevas provides home care daily for an infant born with multiple defects. The program employs more than 300 African American and Latina women, creating high quality para-professional jobs while empowering low-income women with greater skills. Ana, who was on welfare and worked as a secretary, came to CHC in 1993. She was elected to the CHC board of directors in 1995. "Before I felt my life was all it could be. Now, I don't believe anything is standing in my way. I know I can do anything."

The Role of Family Resource Centers

It will not be business as usual for family resource centers in most areas. The volume of clients may increase so much that staff and program restructuring will be necessary. Some of the reforms may have implications we cannot even anticipate. Details about eligibility standards, benefit levels, and numerous other items of information we pass on to families will change. What will perhaps most transform our work will be the enormous shifts in a number of societal relationships that will accompany welfare reform, including those of the impoverished to their government, immigrants to this country, and family workers to their clients, to name a few.

Issues such as domestic violence, disability, substance abuse, and unsafe living environments used to qualify many families to receive public assistance. Now, many families who are facing these issues and temporarily are unable to support themselves cannot receive cash assistance. Thus there is even more pressure on family resource centers now to assist these families quickly in building on their strengths, for they have lost their economic safety net.

A New Way of Working

Recipients of public benefits will need to learn how to navigate the new system so that they may devise strategies to get themselves out of it as quickly and as permanently as possible. This will require family resource centers to engage in longer-range planning than is currently the norm in work with benefit recipients. Recipients will no longer want to apply for benefits and then figure out what path to follow, but rather will need to keep an eye on their time limits and use the period in which they are receiving benefits to best prepare to support themselves and their dependents. To be most useful to them, then, family support workers will need to work with them to formulate strategies and realistic time lines.

For many of us, such strategizing is a new way of relating to families. It requires that we focus on long-term solutions that will keep people from having to reenter the public benefit system. It is important to keep this in mind as we respond to state requirements to move people into work. Family workers in county-funded departments or agencies may feel pressure to get people into a job—any job. We will need to remind ourselves and others that entry level employment for public aid recipients is not a panacea, and that particularly for those who have little work experience and are low-skilled, simply being employed will not translate into independence from public assistance. This is something that as family support workers accustomed to looking at the interrelated needs of family members we can and must contribute to the dialogue on welfare-to-work.

Another change that has resulted from welfare reform is that collaborations and partnerships have become absolute necessities. Those of us who work in family resource centers have a good deal of experience with co-location of services and various levels of collaboration. We can educate others, and we can also take a second look at out own work. Are there other projects or programs we could handle collaboratively? This is a good time to look around our communities to gather ideas,

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identifying agencies that provide different services to our constituencies: these are the ones with which partnerships may be possible.

Employment Development

Perhaps the aspect of welfare reform that will most affect family resource centers is the thrust towards employment for all clients. Welfare-to-work, clearly the foundation of the new legislation, creates extraordinary demands to find employment for thousands of current welfare recipients. If the reforms are to work, our response—and the responses of all segments of society—will have to be even more extraordinary.

There is a growing recognition in the family support field that employment services must be part of our repertoire. Some Bay Area family support centers have begun to devise employment development strategies. Many of these efforts—including a demonstration project being prepared by the Greater Bay Area Family Resource Network—are at the nascent stage, but as they are implemented and tracked, they should inform the field on how linkages can be made within family support centers and how bridges can be built between the social service and employment worlds. While social service providers traditionally have not worked closely with employment programs (even though they serve the same population), such bridges must be built if we are to serve families successfully within the framework of the new reforms. It makes sense to consolidate core and related services within a single agency by adding employment services to those provided at family resource centers: the other services can complement an employment program and therefore advance job placement and retention by addressing indirect obstacles to employment.

The Role of Other Organizations

Family resource centers, however, are not the only organizations which must address the new welfare-to-work requirements. Those of us in the field of family support and in the broader field of social services can take the lead in formulating programs and policies that respond to the needs of families, but ultimately other segments of society must also take up the work to be done.

National Organizations

Because of their extensive resources and scope, national family support organizations such as the Family Resource Coalition of America in Chicago are in a unique position to examine current delivery systems and design strategies to broaden and deepen their reach to the families in need of services, particularly those living in poor neighborhoods. Such organizations may also be able to collect data about programs and the populations they serve and invest in research, evaluation, and staff development. They can promote diversity in program design and encourage family involvement in organizational governance and decision making at both the local and national levels. National organizations may also be able to influence funders and local policy in ways that smaller, community-based organizations cannot.

Employers—Large and Small

Unemployment rates tell us that currently tens of thousands of people are looking for work in California. As we prepare to force into that pool of job-seekers thousands more, the creation and expansion of jobs suitable for former welfare recipients is becoming a pressing challenge. Businesses large and small will play critical roles in meeting this challenge.

Small businesses collectively employ more people than any other sector of the economy, but for a variety of reasons, small business owners are not always able to offer jobs that can support families. As the largest sector of the economy, small business clearly has the potential to contribute greatly to providing jobs to former welfare recipients, but it will take some work to figure out how this is to be done. Perhaps by banding together small businesses could offer better benefits, and perhaps they could adopt employment policies more supportive to families. Large employers, too, need to step up to the task. They have more resources with which to help, and there are a number of things they can do, including adopting hiring policies which target benefit recipients, implementing mentorship or on-the-job training programs, and creating "job hot lines."

Those of us who do not control many jobs need to speak or write to the people who do. Again, making welfare reform work will depend on us all.

Local Community Organizations

Many community organizations—including grassroots agencies, religious institutions, service clubs, business groups, neighborhood associations, and other independent organizations—offer an array of services, but research indicates that they do not always reach families in our most poverty-stricken areas. These organizations possess many strengths and considerable potential to expand their current efforts. They could fill part of the vacuum created by welfare reform by forming local networks and working together to realign and reconfigure existing resources, assisting in community-wide planning efforts that draw on a community's strengths and abilities. Such networks should embrace an inclusive approach, working closely with families and enlisting the participation of new and emerging organizations.

Schools

Schools too could play a role in meeting the challenges posed by welfare reform by opening their doors to community residents and organizations. They could offer services not only to their students but to families and the community in general, encouraging the active participation of parents and the formation of partnerships among teachers, parents, students, neighbors, and public and private agencies.

Educating the Family Support Community

In the coming months (and years), staff development—both training and support—will be critical for everyone in the family support community. Training will need to be two-pronged: first, people must be brought up-to-date on eligibility standards, benefit levels, time limits, starting dates, and so on; and second, they must be trained how to work within the new standards. Family workers who simply try to "plug in" the new requirements to the old way of working will not be effective. We, the family support community, must do our best to address this. Training, of course, will be most needed precisely when no one has time to devote to it, but we cannot be useful to families if we do not take the time to educate ourselves.

This article was adapted with permission from the Greater Bay Area Family Resource Network.

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How to Strengthen Your Community's Economy

A Day Care Center Triggers the Redevelopment of Its Neighborhood

by Malcolm Bush

Imagine a brand new, custom-designed childcare center in an otherwise decaying neighborhood. The center is a brightly colored steel and glass construction with natural light pouring into classrooms and a large activity room, which at night doubles as an adult classroom and community meeting room.

The community is the Longview neighborhood in Decatur, Illinois, 186 miles south of Chicago, where the New Horizon Family and Child Development Center was opened in April 1994. The building is the first physical improvement in the neighborhood in 20 years.

New Horizon is more than a successful and attractive day care center. Parents whose children are enrolled there can get job training or re-enter the work force, secure in the knowledge that their children are in good hands. The childcare center is the first step, and the catalyst, of an ambitious plan to rebuild an eight-by-ten–block neighborhood characterized by empty lots, an illicit drug market, a high percentage of elderly residents and single-parent families, and substandard rental housing owned by absentee landlords who provide limited repairs and few services.

Photo by Marilyn Nolt

Since the center opened it has suffered neither graffiti nor break-ins. The capital improvement represented by the center is expected to spill over to the surrounding area, thanks to a community renewal plan that responds to opportunities for new housing, improved education, and access to jobs and services for seniors. This city-county-community plan calls for demolition of the worst housing; the construction of new in-fill housing; a citizen's center; a satellite campus of the local community college to provide adult remedial, basic, and vocational education; a two-block commercial park to bring jobs to the neighborhood; and a magnet elementary school.[1]

Why Get Involved in Economic Development?

Why should a busy day care center add economic development to its already demanding work of caring for children? Economically active neighborhoods provide families with key benefits that help childcare centers accomplish their goal of keeping families strong. When neighborhood businesses provide basic goods and services like groceries, hardware, and dry cleaning, parents can spend more time with their families, rather than traveling to meet their families' needs, and more jobs are available for people who cannot commute, such as high school students, part-time workers, and older workers.

An attractive neighborhood entices a mix of families—lower- and middle-income—to buy or rent homes, and that mix provides the base for a rich community life. Churches, youth groups, and park programs, for example, can draw on families with a range of experiences and talents. Such neighborhoods have an active street life, which reduces crime, and they offer young people the example of adults regularly going to work and supporting their families. A community with a vital economic life is a healthier, easier, and

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safer place to raise a family. And one visible sign of economic vitality—like a new day care center—can encourage other families, businesses, and nonprofits to invest in their community.

The following questions and answers suggest some of the many ways in which a family support agency or other social service agency can promote the community's economic life.

Can local family support agencies that are rehabbing or expanding their facilities build in a way that promotes economic development?

New Horizon is merely one example of such leveraging. Foodlink, a statewide distributor of surplus food for food pantries in Sacramento, California, negotiated the deeding of 30 acres of a closed military base, warehouses, and a 20,000 square foot freezer to set up a model food packaging company to employ and train homeless people. In Sacramento the emphasis was not on the physical development of a neighborhood, but on the provision of employment to the unemployed.

Are our city and county governments giving low-income communities a fair share of capital improvement funds?

Healthy communities need good roads, sidewalks, parks, street lighting, and other public amenities. These amenities encourage households and businesses to increase their own investment in the neighborhood. Some communities miss out on their share of these public goods and suffer decline. Check local capital budgets to identify the problem and provide the data for a fairer sharing of resources.

Can I or my organization support the work of the local community development corporations?

Community development corporations or CDCs are nonprofits which promote development in several ways. They might build or rehab single or multifamily housing, improve the local retail strip, or encourage local industries to stay in the neighborhood and expand operations. Your organization might partner with a CDC on a joint development project, or you could volunteer at, contribute to, or join your local CDC's board of directors.

Can the flow of social service dollars into our community trigger economic development for local residents?

The Grand Boulevard community on the South Side of Chicago is home to 36,000 mainly African American and low-income residents. In 1994, the Illinois Department of Aging spent $2.7 million to serve Grand Boulevard residents, the Department of Children and Family Services spent $12.4 million, the Department of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities $5.2 million, and the Chicago Housing Authority, $21.7 million. Much of this money went in wages and benefits for social service workers. If a fraction of these expenditures went to local residents who had been trained to work in these agencies, the community would receive a significant economic bonus.[2]

Can I join an effort in my state to promote decent wages and benefits for low-paid family support workers?

The necessary condition for a healthy neighborhood economy are households which earn a living wage. Family support workers often work long hours for low pay and few benefits. Increasing the rewards of their work would benefit the entire community as more people earn enough to care for their families. Cooperative Home Care Associates in the South Bronx and Valley Care Cooperative in Waterbury, Connecticut are two home health aid providers. Esperanza Unida, a community development and job training organization in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, operates a day care center. All three organizations have strategized to raise the wages and benefits of their family-support workers

Can my local high school or youth group integrate economic activity into the curriculum?

The contemporary world demands increased economic literacy from young workers. A few schools have set up small businesses, (lawn care, school supplies, day care, small cafes) to train their students in such skills as marketing, advertising, management, and accounting. Other schools have established branches of credit unions to teach basic lessons in credit, finance, and the advantages of saving. Students who work in these businesses acquire valuable work skills and financial knowledge.

As these examples demonstrate, the first step to promoting economic development in your community is to imagine some of the possibilities. Your day care center, church, block club, school council, or soft-ball league could set aside a session to brainstorm how its members could promote economic development. You may want to invite a local economic development practitioner from a nearby CDC to join the conversation. If you don't know any CDCs call the National Congress for Community Economic Development in Washington, D.C. (202/234-5009) for suggestions.

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Notes

Details of this story and examples of other social service agencies promoting economic development are described in Bush, M., G. Goldwater, and S. Zielenbach (1996) *Increasing returns: the economic development potential of social service programs* (Chicago: Woodstock Institute).

For a complete list of state expenditures and temporal changes in those expenditures see Bush, M., A. Ortiz, and A. Maxwell (1966) *Tracking the dollars: state social service spending in one low-income community* (Chicago: Woodstock Institute).

Time Dollars

Creating a New Currency to Build Community

by Edgar S. Cahn

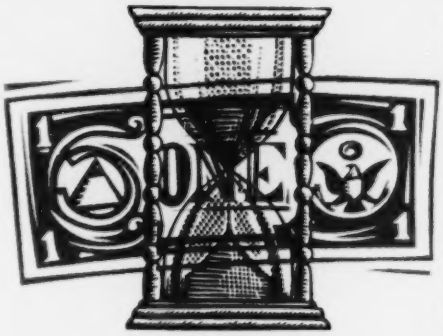
Time Dollars and family support share a common foundation: relationship building. Time Dollars can be a powerful tool for family support programs because they validate reciprocity and relationship building as key ingredients in day-to-day community life. Family support evolved in part as a response to the erosion of the bonds and relationships of family and community life by larger societal changes. While family support programs have achieved success in supporting and strengthening families, building relationships in the larger community has been more difficult.

Time Dollars allow communities to formalize support systems that, although currently informal, are crucial to the vitality of families and neighborhoods. Time Dollars also allow individuals and communities to define as "work" activities that traditionally have not been defined as such. "Work" includes the daily contributions of friends and families who help and care for each other and the community.

In this article, excerpted from a report published by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Time Dollar Institute President Edgar Cahn explains how Time Dollars give individuals and families a way to acquire and share the "social capital" that is needed for optimal child and family development.

Building social infrastructure and assessing community assets have been key elements in past efforts to rebuild communities.[1] Time Dollars add a third piece. Time Dollars are a currency to record, store and reward transactions where neighbors help neighbors. People earn Time Dollars by using their skills and resources to help others (by providing child or elder care, transportation, cooking, home improvement). People spend Time Dollars to get help for themselves or their families, or to join a club that gives them discounts on food or health care.

Time Dollars enable human beings for whom the market economy has no use to redefine themselves as contributors, and they give society a way to value activities the market economy does not. Time Dollars empower any person to convert personal time into purchasing power, stretching limited cash dollars further.



Time Dollars reinforce reciprocity and trust, and they reward civic engagement and acts of decency in a way that generates social capital, one hour at a time.

In the process of developing applications for this new medium of exchange, the Time Dollar Institute has seized upon a fourth element—one that is even more basic, more fundamental than Time Dollars. It is called Co-Production.

What is Co-Production?

Co-Production is the essential contribution to change efforts needed from the ultimate consumer in his or her capacity as student, client, recipient, patient, tenant, beneficiary, neighbor, resident, or citizen. Experience with Time Dollar programs leads to a hypothesis: Without Co-Production, nothing that professionals, organizations, or programs do can succeed. With Co-Production, the impossible comes within reach.

If this hypothesis is true, community-based groups, policymakers, and human service agencies must be convinced of the indispensability of that contribution, and they must begin to intentionally generate Co-Production from the recipients, targets, or consumers of their efforts. Reciprocity must be central to achieve social change. This is the Co-Production Imperative.

Co-Production is not simply a euphemism for expanding or enhancing specialized social services with free labor contributed by the consumer. Its function and its power are far more fundamental. If undertaken as a priority and intentionally, Co-Production can yield new and more effective services and outcomes. It triggers processes and interactions that foster new behaviors. It alters conventional distinctions between producers and consumers, professionals and clients, providers and recipients, givers and takers, investors and managers. By creating parity for individuals and communities in their relationships with professional helpers, Co-Production achieves systemic change.

While Co-Production values what professionals have to offer, it also poses a challenge to prevailing notions of "best practice" to the extent that "our best thinking" has led us to where we are—paralyzed or frustrated by our inability to make inroads on major social problems because we have failed to incorporate Co-Production as a pervasive strategy that redefines roles, relationships, processes, and outcomes.

Yet as critical as it is, Co-Production—the essential labor needed from the ultimate consumer—is never fully funded and rarely directly funded, even partially. Instead, we fund specialized programs, professionals, outreach workers, and local organizations—paying staff while the extensive and essential labor from the individual, the household, or the community goes uncompensated. We rarely lay out this inequity so explicitly. In part, that is because the cost of actually purchasing that labor at market prices, even at minimum wage, would be prohibitive. So we tiptoe around the issue, calling for "community involvement," requiring "citizen participation"—without insisting on it too directly lest somebody ask us to pick up the real cost.

Time Dollars are a mechanism for rewarding that reciprocity and converting that contribution into compensated labor. They are a mechanism for securing Co-Production.

Experiments with Co-Production

This past year, the Time Dollar Institute undertook to design and directly operate cutting-edge Time Dollar programs in order to better understand and showcase the many dimensions of Co-Production, the dynamics it creates, and the reshaping of roles, processes and outcomes that result.

Student Tutors Earn Computers

In a cross-age peer tutoring program in

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Chicago, student tutors earn Time Dollars with which they can buy refurbished computers. Students are co-producing the key element often missing from less successful tutoring and education efforts: peer approval of academic achievement. In the Chicago sites, attendance went up on tutoring days. Students came to school in order to stay after school to tutor or be tutored. Bullying after school stopped. And 400 children earned sufficient Time Dollars to purchase recycled computers to take home at the end of the school year.

Teen Jurors Promote Responsibility

In Washington, D.C., a Time Dollar Youth Court brings juvenile first offenders charged with non-violent offenses before a jury of teenagers who earn Time Dollars for their service. The teens co-produce key elements missing from many unsuccessful juvenile interventions: peer approval and community acceptance. Teen participants gain status by reasoning, by urging responsible, decent behavior and by calling for prudent risk avoidance. In the Washington Time Dollar Youth Court, there have been only 8 re-arrests in more than 150 cases, job offers are coming in for offenders who have completed their community service sentences, and youths are spending the Time Dollars they earned through jury service on recycled computers.

Legal Services Exchanged for Community Improvement

The Shaw neighborhood of Washington, D.C., made a retainer agreement with a local law firm: Residents working on a community-building initiative donate one Time Dollar (one hour of volunteer work) in exchange for one billable hour of legal work toward getting rid of crack houses, fighting police corruption, and releasing funds to renovate a playground. Last year, the firm billed $234,979 in legal services benefiting the community, and community volunteers have paid that bill with Time Dollars earned cleaning up trash, planting flowers, taking down license plate numbers of drug dealers, providing safe escort to seniors, tutoring at school, and performing neighbor-to-neighbor tasks.

To further test the principle, the Institute this year helped public housing residents in Washington, D.C., start a Time Dollar Food Bank. There were many places where residents could get free food—more and possibly better than what the Time Dollar Food Bank could make available. Nonetheless, with the Food Bank as a catalyst, 296 residents of the public housing complexes have generated 78,540 hours of service (measured in Time Dollars) during the past 11 months.

While these are successful examples, it is important to note that Time Dollars are not a panacea, nor are they the only means of securing Co-Production. Volunteer programs, charismatic leadership, block clubs, neighborhood associations, social movements, employee ownership, changes in professional practice that insist upon greater patient or client autonomy, religious exhortation or spiritual inspiration, neighbor-to-neighbor help, resident-owned and managed enterprises, peer counseling and peer support programs, twelve-step programs, the entire self-help movement—all generate Co-Production.

New Strategies For Generating Co-Production

Conventional efforts by human service programs to mobilize a community are labor intensive and tend to tax organizational capacity. In the end, the level of commitment is often unpredictable. However, if human service organizations or programs are to take a new approach and embrace Co-Production in their organizational mission, structure and budget, two questions arise:

1. How do you shift from a service-providing mode, a largesse mode, a unilateral mode, a professional treatment mode, and a traditional volunteer-recruitment mode into a Co-Production mode? and
2. How do you do it without prohibitive cost and an excessive diversion of scarce resources? The following examples begin to answer these questions, and show how Co-Production can be an operational norm for communities, organizations, neighborhoods, membership groups, professionals, and even government agencies.

The New Welfare Law: The "community service" option in the welfare law represents a historic opportunity to redefine work so as to include a broad range of social contributions which the market does not value but which generate the social capital essential to rebuilding community, revitalizing neighborhoods, and strengthening families. In addition, earning Time Dollars for community service work under welfare requirements creates a work record, imparts work readiness habits, generates references, and provides a support system that can be critical to job retention. Time Dollars could buy extensions of public assistance where there are no jobs available.

New Professional Roles: Co-Production provides an opportunity to reconceptualize the nature of the working relationship between service providers and communities. A service organization could become a consulting firm, a lender, a broker, or an investment counselor rather than the "holder" of the knowledge and power needed for community change.

Fee-for-Service Arrangements: Time Dollar fees could be charged for a range of professional services offered in communities: mental and physical health, legal services, etc.

Technical Assistance: Rather than paying professional technical assistance providers, governments and foundations could support reciprocal technical assistance services between neighborhoods.

Tax Strategies: A community could create a special taxing district option modeled on Business Improvement Districts, through which a neighborhood improvement tax (with the option of paying in dollars or Time Dollars) would improve local services, schools, and facilities. Or, where neighborhood improvement results in higher valuation and assessment, tax credits could be offered in return for Time Dollars earned creating the appreciated value.

Home Ownership: Home buyers seeking to secure affordable housing and renovation funds through subsidies and other government programs could be offered Time Dollar loans, which would be repaid through work helping to maintain neighborhoods, provide social services, staff neighborhood facilities, augment Head Start capacity, provide community-based care for the elderly, etc.

Converting Government or Foundation Grants: Community Development Block Grants and other neighborhood development grants could be turned into Time Dollar loans, repayable by community groups. Through this strategy, the city would get services delivered on a community-basis at a price it could not afford otherwise.

Education: Tuition fees or equipment fees for the use of computers could be charged in Time Dollars; students could be permitted to convert loans into Time Dollar loans; adjunct faculty and guest lecturers could receive compensation in Time Dollars coupled with faculty privileges.

New applications of Time Dollars and Co-Production are bounded only by the limits of creativity. In any application, Time Dollars and Co-Production operationalize a dramatic shift in the service delivery relationship, with important results.

The Broader Implications of Co-Production

Changing unilateral acts of largesse—by volunteers, by government, by helping professionals, by social service agencies, by community development corporations—into reciprocity turns decency, caring, and altruism into a catalyst for contribution and self-validation by the recipient. It redefines work. It expands our notion of compensation beyond what money can buy and substantiates a definition of value beyond that to which the market accords recognition. It says we need each other. In the context of broader Co-Production strategies, Time Dollars have the power to:

- Move us from a deficit-model to an asset-based model by harnessing underutilized human resources to help address critical social problems
- Develop human capital so that disadvantaged persons can find paths out of poverty and avoid being shunted for life into dead-end jobs and revitalize the work ethic by rewarding social contribution as authentic work
- Generate social capital in communities habituated to redlining and disinvestment
- Rebuild the non-market economy of family, neighborhood and community

In short, Co-Production supplies the elements needed to bring fruition to a vision: To put within our reach the power to create a world where any person willing to contribute by helping another will be able to earn the purchasing power and status needed to enjoy a decent standard of living and the opportunity to learn and to grow.

Edgar Cahn is President of the Time Dollar Institute, a non-profit corporation that creates and sponsors initiatives so that the beneficiaries of social programs can become co-producers of education, justice, self-sufficiency, opportunity, community development, and social change. The Time Dollar Institute can be reached at P.O. Box 42160, Washington, D.C. 20015. For information and free Time Dollar software, visit the web site at http://www.timedollar.org

Home-Made Currency Strengthens Community

Local Leader Tells of Ithaca's Success—And How It's Been Replicated

by Paul Glover

Over 1,250 residents of Ithaca, New York, have exchanged $62,000 of their own local paper money. Since 1991, thousands of purchases and many new friendships have been made with this cash, and about $2,000,000 of local trading has been added to the "Grassroots National Product," adding the equivalent of one-hundred $20,000-a-year jobs to the local economy. Based on Ithaca's example, there are at least 45 HOUR systems in North America, with at least 30 more forming.

We printed our own money because we watched federal dollars come to town, shake a few hands, then leave to buy rain forest lumber and fight wars. Ithaca's HOURs, by contrast, stay in our region to help us hire each other. While dollars make us increasingly dependent on multinational corporations and bankers, HOURs reinforce community trading and expand commerce that is more accountable to our concerns for ecology and social justice.

How It Works

The Ithaca HOUR, worth $10, is the basic unit of currency. This value was chosen because 10 dollars per hour is the average of wages/salaries in Tompkins County. HOUR notes—in 2, 1, 1/2, 1/4, and 1/8 HOUR denominations—buy plumbing, carpentry, electrical work, roofing, nursing, chiropractic, childcare, car and bike repair, food, eyeglasses, firewood, gifts, and thousands of other goods and services.

Alternatives Federal Credit Union (see related story, this issue) accepts them for mortgage and loan fees. People pay rent with HOURs. The best restaurants in town take them, as do movie theaters, bowling alleys, two large locally owned grocery stores, many garage sales, 55 farmer's market vendors, the Chamber of Commerce, and 350 other businesses. One of our latest additions is the local hospital!

There are three ways that HOURs enter circulation. First, everyone who agrees to accept them is paid one or two HOURs for being listed in our newsletter HOUR Town. Every eight months they may receive an additional HOUR as reward for continuing participation. Most HOURs, however, have been issued as payment to those who agree to back HOURs by being listed in our directory Ithaca Money. They, too, may receive a bonus payment for every eight months that they continue to participate. Anyone—individuals and businesses alike—may earn and spend HOURs. And once issued, anyone may spend the HOURS, whether they are listed in our directory or not.

The third way HOURs enter circulation is by grants. Barter Potluck, our wide-open governing body, donates 10 percent of all HOURs issued to nonprofit community organizations. So far, 40 organizations have received over $6,000 of local currency. (Five percent of HOURs may be issued to the system itself, primarily to pay for printing HOURs.) We have also capitalized new businesses with no-interest HOUR loans ranging in value from $50 to $1000.

Continued on page 14

Five Months in the Life of an HOUR

an actual Ithaca HOUR trading path

by Houghton/Glover

ETHEL MAILED THE COUPON FROM THE BACK PAGE OF ITHACA MONEY, OFFERING BOOKKEEPING. SHE AGREES TO KEEP HER PHONE NUMBER UP-TO-DATE.
SO ONE HOUR WAS ISSUED TO HER FOR BECOMING A PUBLISHED BACKER OF HOURS, ACCORDING TO BARTER POTLUCK POLICY.
DISBURSEMENTS
AN HOUR IS BORN!
AND ETHEL RECEIVES IT IN THE MAIL.
SHE SPENT IT AT LITTLETREE ORCHARDS FOR APPLES....
...WHO PAID IT TO ERICA FOR PRUNING..
...WHO BOUGHT GROCERIES AT GREENSTAR...
...WHO PAID DAVID, ONE OF 20 GREENSTAR EMPLOYEES ACCEPTING HOURS...
ITHACA HOUR BUMPER STICKER
...WHO PAID RENT TO HIS LANDLADY DEBBY...
...WHOSE FRIEND JIM BOUGHT SEVERAL HOURS FOR DOLLARS (AT $10 PER HOUR)...
...AND SPENT THEM FOR LAND-SCAPING WITH BILL & CHRIS...
...WHO REPAID A $300 LOAN WITH 30 HOURS TO DAN AND DIANE...
...WHO, AMONG OTHER THINGS, BOUGHT SANDWICHES AT EDDY
THE EDDY STREET CAFE...
...WHICH BOUGHT A BIG AD IN ITHACA MONEY...
THE EDDY STREET CAFE
...WHICH PAID ITS OFFICE RENT TO NEIL AND KATHY...
...WHO MADE A MORTGAGE PAYMENT TO MARTY, A MASSAGE THERAPIST ON THE LIST...
...WHO GOT FIDDLE LESSONS FROM DAVID, WHOSE WIFE CAROL SPENT IT FOR NOTE CARDS...
...FROM ACORN DESIGNS, WHICH PAID EMPLOYEE SALLY...
...WHO PAID PART OF HER RENT TO ELSON & JULIA.
ELSON GOT EFFECTIVE BACK INJURY THERAPY..
...FROM BARBARA, WHO BOUGHT A DRUM FOR HER GRANDSON FROM TOKO IMPORTS..
...WHICH THEY USED TO GET PHOTOCOPIES AT COPY CENTRAL...
...WHICH PAID EMPLOYEE COREY, WHO GOT ACUPUNCTURE FROM ROBERT...
...WHO SPENT HOURS FOR SWING DANCE LESSONS FROM JEAN & ASWIN...
...WHO PAID THEIR FRIEND JAN FOR A MASSAGE...
...WHO SPENT THE HOUR AT OASIS NATURAL GROCERY...
...WHICH PAID SUSIE FOR A SUPPLY OF VEGAN EPICURE SEITAN...
...WHO THEN PAID ETHEL (WHO STARTED THIS SEQUENCE) FOR BOOK-KEEPING...
...WHO KEEPS THE HOURS MOVING
AND READY FOR MORE!
TO BE CONTINUED

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The Community Is Invested

HOURs are backed by real people and real labor, skills, and tools. And it's still legal tender, according to Professor Lewis Solomon of George Washington University who wants an extensive study of the relevant case law, Rethinking Our Centralized Monetary System: the Case for Local Currency (Praeger, 1996). IRS and FED officials agree: when asked by the media, they have said repeatedly that there is no prohibition of local currency as long as it does not look like dollars and denominations are valued at one dollar or more. HOURs are taxable income when traded for professional goods or services, and our district attorney has declared them a financial instrument, protected by law from counterfeit.

The HOURly minimum wage lifts the lowest-paid up without knocking down higher wages. For example, several of Ithaca's organic farmers are paying the highest common farm labor wages in the world: $10 of spending power per HOUR. These farmers benefit by the HOUR's loyalty to local agriculture. On the other hand, dentists, massage therapists, and lawyers who charge more than the $10 per hour are permitted to collect several HOURs hourly. But professionals choose to offer their services at the equitable one HOUR per hour rate. And spending HOURs at Ithaca's locally owned stores keeps more wealth in the community.

Bills Portray Local Values

The images on Ithaca's money honor our children, native flowers, waterfalls, crafts, and farms. Our commemorative HOUR is the first paper money in the United States to honor an African American. HOURs are harder to counterfeit than dollars. All are multicolored with serial numbers, and some are printed on handmade hemp paper. The 1993 HOUR note is printed on locally made, watermarked, 100-percent cattail (marsh reed) paper, with matching serial numbers front and back. The 1995 quarter HOUR uses a thermal ink, invented in Ithaca, that disappears briefly when touched or photocopied.

"As a visitor to Ithaca, I bought HOURS from a store and went out to find what I could do with these unusual bills. To transact HOURS is to engage in person-to-person relationships, and to build community in the process."
—Hudson Valley Green Times, Winter 1994

Growth in Ithaca

HOURs in Ithaca is growing: The new Ithaca Health Fund provides nonprofit, locally controlled health financing that accepts HOURs as a part of premium payments (visit the world wide web site at http://www.lightlink.com/healthfund). We also intend to open a community economic development center called HOUR Town, and look forward to being able to provide major funding for community organizations, new business start-ups, and municipal projects like weatherization and transit. Someday we may be able to purchase land for farms.

The success stories of 300 participants published in HOUR Town so far testify to the acts of generosity and community that our system prompts. HOUR Town's 1,500 listings, rivaling the Yellow Pages, form a portrait of our community's ability to bring into the marketplace time and skills not employed by the conventional market. Residents are proud of income gained by doing work they enjoy. As we discover new ways to provide for each other, we replace dependence on imports and transport fuels and relieve the social desperation that leads to compulsive shopping and wasted resources. We encounter each other as fellow Ithacans, rather than as winners and losers scrambling for dollars. In Ithaca, we're making a community while making a living.

The Hometown Money Starter Kit explains the process of starting and maintaining an HOURs system step by step, and includes forms, laws, articles, procedures, insights, samples of Ithaca's HOURs, and issues of Ithaca Money (it costs $25). *A 17-minute English language video and a 10-minute Spanish language video are available for $15 each. The kit and videotape together cost $40. Contact Paul Glover at Ithaca HOURS, Box 6578, Ithaca, NY 14851, 607/ 272-4330, http://www.publiccom. com/web/ ithacahour*

HOURs

- Expand the local money supply
- Promote local shopping
- Double the local minimum wage to $10
- Increase the amount consumers spend at local businesses
- Help start new businesses and jobs
- Reduce dependence on imports and transport fuels
- Make grants to nonprofit community organizations
- Create zero-interest loans
- Stimulate community pride

Financial Institutions That Empower

by Laura Benedict and Pei-Yuan Chung

In many communities, those who need credit the most are unable to secure it. Many families are trapped in poverty by a weak credit history or past financial problems. Without assets, such as equity in a home, it is difficult for family members to fulfill their potential by, for example, sending a child to college or starting a business. When community members own homes and businesses, communities have a solid foundation on which to grow and prosper.

Recently, community development financial institutions (CDFIs) have arisen to meet the need for credit. Low-income families and others facing difficult or unusual financial situations can now gain access to affordable homes, decent jobs, and economic security. Today over 350 CDFIs in communities across the United States provide loans for home ownership, small businesses, and nonprofit organizations. The Center for Community Self-Help is one of these CDFIs.

The Center for Community Self-Help was founded in 1980 to expand economic opportunities for low-income workers in North Carolina, where more than 27 percent of full-time workers earn less than $15,000 a year. It soon became evident that this goal could best be achieved by helping to remove a key barrier to economic opportunity: lack of access to credit. Thus, in 1984 the Center created two financing affiliates, the Self-Help Ventures Fund and Self-Help Credit Union, to make home and business loans to people not served by conventional financial institutions. In more recent years, it has begun to meet the growing needs of today's families and communities through a loan program for nonprofits and human service providers.

Using the Services of a CDFI

Services to Families and Individuals

Home Lending

The American dream of home ownership eludes thousands of families. These families work hard and pay taxes, yet many can't qualify for home loans. They may not have money for a down payment, or they may have credit blemishes. CDFIs like Self-Help Credit Union can offer flexible financing alternatives and counseling to overcome these barriers. For example, in 1995 one African-American mother had heavy medical bills for her father which prevented her family from qualifying for a traditional mortgage loan. She came to Self-Help, which, because of its flexible guidelines, was able to give her a loan. She was then able to move her family from a mobile home to a house in eastern North Carolina. Last year, Self-Help was able to help 113 similar families in North Carolina move into their own homes. Fifty-eight percent of these loans went to minority families, 28 percent to rural families, and 33 percent to woman-headed households.

Business Lending

In the area of commercial lending, Self-Help places high priority on making business ownership possible for people who have entrepreneurial talents and drive, but limited assets. Traditional banks may have rigid standards for commercial lending, but CDFIs, with their primary focus on community development, can be more flexible and take the time to help a marginal applicant become a good borrower. Self-Help loans to businesses have ranged in size from very small "micro loans" of several hundred dollars upwards to a million dollars. It has concentrated its efforts during the past few years on filling many underserved financing niches for commercial enterprises, and particularly on two fronts: "micro" lending for very small businesses and self-employed entrepreneurs, and financing for larger businesses that increase local employment and ownership opportunities.

For example, one Latin American man, after working in a restaurant for 18 years, came to Self-Help in hopes of starting his own eatery. He had heard from a friend that Self-Help directed its lending toward new entrepreneurs with little wealth, and thus might be the organization to help make his vision a reality. After just 18 months, he was able to pay off the Self-Help loan, and he is now planning to expand his restaurant business.

Services to Nonprofit and Human Services Organizations

Community Facilities Fund

Through its Community Facilities Fund, Self-Help Credit Union has been targeting family-related service providers and, especially, the child care industry. Since 1994 it has focused on this area because it plays a critical role in promoting community development and because our research indicates that conventional options fall short of the demand. During 1992 (before developing a targeted lending focus), Self-Help made two loans to childcare providers. In 1996 it made 37 loans, delivering almost $3 million, to childcare providers. One typical childcare loan was made to an African American couple in North Carolina. They received a loan of $25,000 to add a room onto their house, making it possible for them to expand their home childcare business. This allowed them to serve 12 children instead of five and at the same time improved the value of their home and consequently, their net worth.

Self-Help has begun to expand its focus, bringing the same dedication it has shown in the childcare area to assisting the broader nonprofit and human services community. Shrinking resources and the downsizing of the government lead many nonprofits to seek loans. Loans may be a good means of financing if:

- *The project will increase revenue beyond the cost of the loan.* A rural nonprofit hospital used $225,000 in loans to open a health clinic in a neighboring town. Before the clinic opened, area residents drove substantial distances, often down mountain roads, for a shot or routine checkup.

- *The nonprofit expects, but has not received, a grant or a contract.* A loan can serve as a bridge. Self-Help made a $253,000 loan to a mental health organization, allowing it to buy eight condominiums and lease them at affordable rates to low-income adults with mental disabilities. The group was to receive funding for the project from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, but that funding could take two years to reach them, coming much too late to buy these homes. The Self-Help loan allowed them to buy the condominiums before they lost their purchase option. It was to be repaid a year later, once the federal funding came through.

- *The project will replace a current cost, such as rent or a lease payment.* In 1996, Self-Help made a loan to a nonprofit agency that provides housing and support services to adults with developmental disabilities. The agency purchased two townhouses, each having space for three adults. In considering the loan, the organization compared its current rental payments of $575 per month to the projected mortgage payments with a Self-Help loan. Self-Help was able to offer a very attractive package which brought the monthly payment to just under $400. Ownership in this particular case was not only cheaper, but offered stability to the residents and provided a vehicle for asset-building for the nonprofit.

Nonfinancial Assistance

As a nonprofit, Self-Help understands the challenges of fundraising, the impact of the changing political environment, the creativity required for staff development with modest resources, and the ins and outs of nonprofit accounting.

It offers management help for entrepreneurs, household budget counseling, and technical advice for nonprofits. Capacity building is, at times, the most beneficial service.

Self-Help has developed several manuals, including *The Business Side of Child Care*, a reference manual and diskette to guide providers and lenders in starting childcare programs; and *Commercial Lending Guide: The Wit and Wisdom of the Self-Help Team*, a training and reference manual that describes the commercial lending process.

As a CDFI, Self-Help's goal has been to help people climb the ladder of economic opportunity. For those who are not quite ready to step up to the ladder, such as those with developmental disabilities, or for those who have fallen off, such as recovering substance abusers, Self-Help supports the organizations that support them. For families with no assets, Self-Help helps them to climb the ladder through owning their first home. That home can be then used as collateral for starting or expanding a business, allowing them to climb even higher and take advantage of the opportunities that ownership can provide. Families are key to climbing that ladder, and knowing about CDFIs as a tool can help family counselors guide them on the in their path to a better standard of living.

For more information on CDFIs, see the Resource File at the back of this issue.

Laura Benedict directs Self-Help's North Carolina Community Facilities Fund. Pei-Yuan Chung is a student at Duke University and works in Community Facilities, focusing on childcare. They can be reached at Self-Help Credit Union, P.O. Box 3619, Durham, NC 27702, 919/ 956-4400 (phone), laura@self-help.org and peiyuan@self-help.org.

Dollars For Dreams Youth Credit Union

by Geni Abrams and Joel Cisne

Alternatives Federal Credit Union in Ithaca, New York, sponsors a large and highly regarded credit union for young people that with the exception of its coordinator, Theresa Bennett, is run exclusively by volunteers under the age of 18. Its name is Dollars for Dreams (DFD), and with more than 570 members and $180,000 in assets, it is one of the premiere youth credit unions in the nation. Currently 11 volunteers between the ages of 11 and 17 hold teller positions, edit a quarterly newsletter and other external copy, and handle loans.

"Since I started here two years ago as a Volunteer in Service to America, the volunteers have become like my children," Bennett says. "The oldest one, Kate Kaproth, is 18 now, and she is about to leave us for college. I'm starting to feel 'empty nest syndrome'—for someone else's kid!"

One advantage of working with young volunteers is that they are willing to try out new ideas, Bennett says. For example, Kaproth designed and produced a game called "Deposit 5." Each member gets a card with 10 squares printed on one side and the member's name and account number on the other. "Each time you deposit five dollars, you get a stamp on one of your squares," Bennett explains. "When you fill all 10 squares, you become eligible for a monthly drawing where the winner gets a DFD t-shirt (designed by our volunteers) plus other prizes donated by local merchants." Since the game started one-and-a-half years ago, deposits have increased.

What impresses Bennett most about her young volunteers is their reliability, their ability to grasp dry and complex financial concepts, and their enthusiasm for their jobs. Consider 16-year-old Andrew Sackett, for example, DFD's loan officer and one of its most enthusiastic volunteers. DFD offers loans of up to $500, allowing a maximum of two years to pay them off. As soon as a payment is a week late, Andrew will call and remind the borrower to come in. So far his vigilance has paid off. There has not been a single instance of delinquency.

DFD is open on Fridays from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. and Saturdays from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. On Fridays, their main workday, those who aren't tellers work on marketing, fundraising, and planning projects. DFD accomplishments include holding two workshops teaching responsibility with money, creating a video on how loans work, authoring an edition of the nationally circulated newsletter Extending Communications, organizing a committee to manage projects, setting up a world wide web page, and holding two bake sales that together raised approximately $160.

"No question about it," Bennett says. "Young people these days are more concerned than we used to be . . . about the environment, their communities, and the world in general. Our challenge is to show them how credit unions help their fellow students, their families, and their neighbors. Recruiting volunteers and teaching them about credit unions when they're young is one of the best ways to ensure a lifetime commitment to the credit union movement."

This article was adapted from CUC Connection, *November 1996.*

For more information, contact Theresa Bennett, Alternatives Federal Credit Union, 301 W. State St., Ithaca, NY 14850, 607/273-4666 (phone) 607/277-6391 (fax), AFCU@alternatives.org (e-mail).

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Community Partnership Lending Through Credit Unions

Nonprofits and Credit Unions Help Families Get Loans

by Leni Hochman

Ithaca, New York, is blessed with many nonprofit organizations (NPOs) that supply advocacy and support to their clients. Too often, however, these organizations cannot supply one thing that could make all the difference in the world—money. Community partnership lending, a program announced in January 1997, addresses this problem by joining the resources and skills of nonprofit organizations with those of Alternatives Credit Union so that it can offer loans to people who need them.

How It Works

Through community partnership lending, a deposit (called risk capital) made by a nonprofit organization is doubled by the credit union to create a lending pool. Then the organization, with guidance from Alternatives, develops lending criteria and lends the money to the organization's clients. Alternatives originates and services the loans.

For example, an NPO raises $10,000 from a grant and deposits it. With help from Alternatives, the organization makes a flexible loan policy to accommodate the needs of its clients or members. It can then authorize the credit union to distribute up to $20,000 in low-interest loans. The NPO owns the risk pool and can withdraw it when all loans are repaid.

Innovative loan programs such as these are made possible by the fact that the nonprofit organizations do a lot of the work that otherwise would have to be done by the lending institution. And while the loans are a higher-than-normal risk for the credit union, that risk is reduced by the risk capital deposited by the nonprofit organization and by the relationships of mutual accountability that the organizations have with their program participants, who are taking part in educational opportunities and/or counseling as part of the loan.

Snapshots of Partnerships

The Three Pillars Foundation is one example of community partnership lending in action. The foundation is sponsored by the Ithaca Housing Authority's Family Self-Sufficiency Program. After completing course work in the program, participants may apply for a loan to use in paying for defaulted student loans, car repair, and medical or credit card bills. The foundation provides education and peer support while attacking the problem of severe, long-term debt. Three Pillars has distributed its first loan.

Photo courtesy MIHOW

Another entity that soon will take part in community partnership lending is the Economic Opportunities Corporation. The corporation will give emergency loans for unmet medical expenses, home repairs, vehicle repairs, rent security deposits, childcare expenses, and transportation costs starting this fall. It will begin considering loans for small business ventures next spring.

Alternatives Credit Union also is negotiating a partnership agreement with Community Enterprise Opportunities, which provides small loans, workshops, and technical assistance to people who are starting or expanding microenterprises.

One Collaboration Leads to Others

Community partnership lending is allowing Alternatives Credit Union to establish partnerships with other community-based organizations. Alternatives is working with the three organizations described above on an asset accumulation program called individual development accounts: any donation made to the organization for the purpose of lending will be pooled with an equal amount from Alternatives. The program boosts nonprofit organizations' fundraising efforts because donors know their money is going twice as far as it normally would.

These innovative lending programs are bringing together the capital of a lending institution with the community-based strengths of local nonprofit organizations. Although it is too early to measure their long-term effects, the programs are expected to promote economic security in families and in the community.

Leni Hochman is Assistant Manager of Alternatives Federal Credit Union, in charge of Marketing and Personnel. She started there as a teller in 1982, when the Credit Union had $1 million in assets and 1000 members. Alternatives now has $22.5 million in assets and over 6500 members.

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Supporting Families Toward Economic Security

California Programs Show By Example

Families face growing challenges in the struggle to do well for themselves and their children in California.[1] Both private and public sector restructuring are eroding traditional sources of families' social and economic security. As a result, local communities must be well organized to capture scarce opportunities and resources that can promote family stability and self-sufficiency. To meet this challenge, new leadership must be mobilized in many areas of community life. It is in this context that the National Economic Development & Law Center decided to explore the emerging role of family support programs in community economic development.

The National Economic Development & Law Center's far-reaching survey indicates that family support programs are beginning to engage in activities to enhance family economic security.

Two Fields Overlap

The terms "family support" and "community economic development" have both been used to describe a wide range of activities carried out by many different organizations. Family support programs provide culturally responsive services to families that empower adults in their roles as parents, nurturers, and providers. Community economic development organizations seek to restore the economic base of low-income communities through local development strategies that are resident-led.

Whereas the primary object of family support is to strengthen family relations, the primary object of community economic development is community change. Still, the fields share certain core values, especially an emphasis on resident or participant empowerment as the key to the effectiveness of programs addressed respectively to changing family relationships and community conditions.

Strategies for Success

To acquaint itself with family support practitioners and their emerging interest in community economic development, the Center conducted 12 telephone and eight on-site interviews of California family support programs. Then, through a written survey mailed to more than 1,000 California organizations, staff attempted to determine whether the interviewed programs were representative of a broader engagement in community economic development among family support practitioners.[2] Two practitioner focus groups and an advisory committee helped to interpret and clarify the findings.

The information provided by the survey indicates that family support programs are beginning to engage in activities to enhance family economic security. Some of their strategies, illustrated by specific program examples, focus on parental employment through:

1. Participant hiring in family support and human service activities
2. Employment brokering, or facilitating the hiring of participants by regional employers
3. Self-employment or microenterprise development
4. Nonprofit enterprise development to create new jobs for participants

Family support programs do not limit their community economic development activities to those that focus on parental employment: they are also engaged in:

1. Mutual assistance activities designed to effect community-wide economic exchange and lower families' cost of living
2. Affordable housing development;
3. Development of stable, better quality childcare for working parents
4. Partnerships between family support programs and community development organizations

Continued on page 21

What Can I Do?

Playing a Role in Community Economic Development

The Family Resource Coalition of America is developing new resources and materials to help the family support field apply community economic development strategies and concepts. Are you interested in combining community economic development with your work to strengthen and support families and communities? Fill out and send FRCA the survey on the following page. The information used in this survey will tell FRCA what kinds of assistance would be most useful to you, so that we can develop the materials you need. Please answer all of the questions and fax or send the survey by March 31, 1998, to:

Family Resource Coalition of America
Attn: Mark McDaniel
20 N. Wacker Drive
Suite 1100
Chicago, IL 60606
Fax: 312/338-1522

Program Survey

Family Support and Community Economic Development

1. Organization: _____

   Address: _____

   Your name/title: _____

   Telephone number: _____

2. What are the principal settings for your family support activities?

   ❒ homes
   ❒ family resource center
   ❒ schools
   ❒ multi-service site
   ❒ child care or youth center
   ❒ other (please describe):_____

3. Do your organizational goals include changing any of the following conditions that affect families?

   ❒ housing opportunities
   ❒ job opportunities
   ❒ safety on the streets
   ❒ drug trafficking
   ❒ child care resources
   ❒ health care resources
   ❒ school quality
   ❒ police relations
   ❒ adult education/job training resources
   ❒ banking/financial resources
   ❒ political power
   ❒ community leadership
   ❒ other (please describe):_____

4. Does your organization (alone or in collaboration with others) undertake (or have plans to undertake) any of the following community development activities?

	YES	NO	PLANS
a. housing development	❒	❒	❒
b. enterprise development	❒	❒	❒
c. small business or self-employment support programs	❒	❒	❒
d. commercial development or revitalization	❒	❒	❒
e. child care development	❒	❒	❒
f. loan fund or credit union development	❒	❒	❒
g. community greening or gardening	❒	❒	❒
h. community organizing for safety	❒	❒	❒
i. other (please describe):_____			

5. Does your organization (alone or in collaboration with others) undertake (or have plans to undertake) any of the following employment development activities?

	YES	NO	PLANS
a. vocational assessment and counseling	❒	❒	❒
b. adult basic education	❒	❒	❒
c. GED program	❒	❒	❒
d. ESL program	❒	❒	❒
e. job club (support group)	❒	❒	❒
f. job referral and information	❒	❒	❒
g. self-employment training	❒	❒	❒

h. job training	❒	❒	❒
i. job creation through enterprise development	❒	❒	❒
j. transportation to employment	❒	❒	❒
k. child care for working parents	❒	❒	❒
l. other (please describe):_____	❒	❒	❒

6. Does your organization have written policies or procedures to recruit program participants or neighborhood residents as employees?

❒ Yes ❒ No ❒ Policies for both

7. Are you interested in opportunities to undertake community development or employment development activities?

❒ Strongly interested ❒ Interested ❒ Not interested

8. What assets can your organization draw on in order to pursue community development or employment development activities? (circle)

a. past organizational successes
b. participant interest/support
c. part of our mission
d. board commitment or expertise
e. have a community plan
f. partnership or funding opportunities
g. staff commitment or expertise
h. public sector support
i. economic conditions external to the organization
j. other (please describe):_____

9. What barriers prevent your organization from pursuing community development or employment development activities? (circle)

a. current funding is service specific
b. technical assistance
c. peer mentoring
d. planning grant
e. operating grant
f. grants or loans for project start-up costs
g. other (please describe):_____

10. What kinds of assistance would you utilize, if available, to help your organization undertake community development or employment development activities? (circle)

a. training
b. technical assistance
c. peer mentoring from similar programs
d. planning grant
e. operating grant
f. grants or loans for project start-up costs
g. other (please describe):_____

Please fax the completed survey by March 31, 1998, to Mark McDaniel, FRCA, 312/338-1522, or mail it to:

Family Resource Coalition of America
Attn: Mark McDaniel
20 N. Wacker Drive
Suite 1100
Chicago, IL 60606

This survey was adapted with permission from the National Economic Development & Law Center. It originally was developed for the NEDLC publication *Community Renewal of Family Economic Security.*

Photo courtesy MIHOW

5. Comprehensive community exchange initiatives. While promising, all of these strategies, including those related to employment, raise many questions and require further development and evaluation before they can be viewed as models for other family support programs

The family support field in California is characterized by a remarkable diversity of sponsorship, setting, and services provided, which may indicate a fundamental "entrepreneurial" resourcefulness in the practice of family support. There is a significant degree of engagement with lower-income communities and communities of color, where the need for local community-based organizations to assemble resources and develop strategies that promote family economic security is the greatest. Eighty-four percent of the surveyed programs were interested in building capacity to pursue community economic development. Given their primary focus on the family, it is not surprising that their greatest interest is in building community resources that support child health, education, and out-of-home care, and next, in strategies that support parental employment. They identify participant interest and support as the most important assets they bring to community economic development activities.

Programs Take Lead From Families

The family support field's emerging interest in community economic development may have been fostered by communities' need to establish priorities rooted in broad-based assessments and to plan how to meet those priorities. Yet the family, rather than a specific geographic or ethnic community, is the focus of family support programs. Several family support principles lead these programs, unlike those offered by traditional human services, to engage in resident-led strategies that focus on developing new community resources and enterprises.

In particular, they place a strong emphasis on community outreach and inclusiveness, convenience to families, prevention rather than crisis responses, mobilization of parents' strengths and assets, cultural accountability and responsiveness, parent leadership, and community context. As they apply these principles in diverse community settings, family support practitioners may develop and sustain a focus on the local economic opportunities, resources, and community markets that affect family welfare.

Partnership Offers Solutions to Challenges

Family support programs face a number of challenges as they develop their community economic development capacities in the midst of dramatic public and private sector changes. To meet these challenges, these programs need to identify the strategic intersection of their unique organizational strengths and capacities with the community market and with partnership and resource opportunities.

Promising strategies should continue to be developed and evaluated, with attention being paid to common issues of organizational capacity requirements, relative community benefit, and community leadership implications. Greater emphasis should be given to evaluating community change activities and to understanding how new evaluation methods can inform outcome-based public sector funding.

Dialogue and exchange between the fields of family support and community economic development on critical practice issues should be promoted. In particular, the diverse ways that practitioners in both fields support shared leadership among community residents, professional staff, and outside stakeholders deserve more critical examination, as does the effect of cultural differences on leadership practices. Partnerships and collaborations should be explored before an organization duplicates a program capacity that already exists in the community.

Both fields need to build their capacity to monitor and influence state and local resources and policies that will increasingly affect community building and community economic development in California's low-income communities.

Notes

Excerpted with the permission of the National Economic Development & Law Center from their study on California family support programs, published in *Community Renewal of Family Economic Security*.

The survey is included in this issue of FRCA *Report* in shortened form. See previous page.

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Federal Efforts Injected with Family Support

by Ann Rosewater

Federal health and human services programs increasingly incorporate family support themes in their policies and activities. And family support is becoming an important strategy in community building. Specifically, two key concepts about supporting families are emerging in federal initiatives: that healthy outcomes for children require that their families have a combination of opportunities to provide both economic and social support; and that those opportunities need to be fostered in the community and by the community. These ideas are being embraced within initiatives that, as a rule, have focused on individuals, as well as by more recent efforts to effect change comprehensively across systems and in defined geographic areas.

Several federal programs implemented in recent years, such as Early Head Start, the Family Preservation and Support Services Program, and Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities, include principles of family-focused and community-based services and supports, partnerships with residents and families, multi-generational approaches, building on strengths and assets, and coordination and co-location of services as key elements. These important new initiatives reflect the promising learnings about practice, policy, institutional, and systemic change that have been emerging from the family support field.

As the federal role has begun to change, these principles have offered a framework for the new intergovernmental and public-private partnerships necessary to achieve our goals of healthy family and child development. Significant changes in the welfare and health care systems also place new decision-making responsibilities at the state and community levels, create new expectations for low-income families in the areas of employment and parental responsibility, and create new challenges for child, family, and community development.

Welfare Reform: A Broad Vision in San Francisco

Welfare reform, for example, creates new expectations for very low-income families to go to work, and restricts the time a family can receive federal assistance. Changes in the welfare law also create new expectations and flexibility for states to create the opportunities that enable families to meet the new requirements. These transformations offer a chance for innumerable innovations and partnerships to generate the appropriate supports.

In essence, the Family Place—in Detroit's federally supported Empowerment Zone—has taken the concepts of family-centered comprehensive services and put them into practice as a critical element of a community and economic development strategy.

In many places, however, in order to be successful, innovation around welfare reform requires a broader community vision. The larger community, in some cases a metropolitan area, will be needed to provide the jobs and supports that an individual and her or his family will require to find a job, take the job, and keep the job. As a result, states and some communities have undertaken strategic planning processes, engaging representatives from sectors not typically at the table in designing social services, such as residents, businesses, the faith community, transportation planners, and other stakeholders that have both direct and indirect impacts on a community's ability to thrive.

One notable example is the San Francisco, California, task force established by Mayor Willie Brown, Jr., which was charged with developing a community-level response to the federal changes in programs affecting low-income families. In its recommendations for restructuring the city's social welfare system, the Mayor's Welfare Task Force identified several important themes to guide the city and the county into a method of service delivery that is less focused on eligibility determination and service fragmentation and more centered on supporting the whole family by discovering its strengths and needs. The task force used family support themes to undergird its planning and development of a new service structure that encourages and assists individuals to go to work while ensuring that their children are safe, supervised and receiving good care.

One key recommendation of the San Francisco task force is to make the system more responsive and sensitive by employing community residents and former welfare recipients to provide support for others making the transition. This approach is intended to provide an alternative to the traditional model of a caseworker who fixes problems for the family, replacing it with one in which a peer or neighbor, with a familiar face, support the family through a complex set of changes. It also creates jobs for community members leaving public assistance. Another recommendation calls for using existing community infrastructures, such as churches and community centers, as places to provide support, deliver services, and provide employment information.

Family Support in Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities

Themes similar to those of the San Francisco effort are evident in various Empowerment Zones and Enterprise

Communities across the country. These efforts, which number 105 nationwide, are the centerpiece of the Clinton Administration's effort to revitalize distressed communities. These neighborhoods and communities are provided tax incentives and discretionary funding for a 10-year period. Built on the premises of economic opportunity, sustainable community development, community-based partnerships, and a strategic vision for change, the Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities are primers for building the networks necessary to ensure family support.

Within a six-block radius of north Detroit, an Empowerment Zone has forged a partnership with the W. K. Kellogg Foundation to establish a "village" that revitalizes the community and its families. Inside the village are familiar establishments—a high school, churches, businesses, non-profit community organizations, and health centers—working in tandem to provide family support services to residents. At the center of the village is the Family Place, where agencies, parents, and community organizations collaborate in running an early childhood, family development, and family support center that links on-site resources with those available throughout the community.

What makes the Family Place special is that a family does not have to be unemployed, be low-income, or have a dysfunction to apply. Services and resources are available to any resident of the community, and are delivered with a full understanding of family strengths and family-identified needs. Childcare, parenting classes, behavioral and physical health care, job readiness services, and other types of support are coordinated and continually evaluated to make sure that the services are appropriate and effective. In essence, the Family Place has taken the concepts of family-centered comprehensive services and put them into practice as a critical element of a community and economic development strategy.

The Central Savannah River Area (CSRA) Enterprise Community, spanning six counties in Georgia, also is using the family support model. CSRA has established human development centers in each of its 10 census tracts. The partnership includes 15 public and private organizations that provide the centers with funds in addition to the federal and city money. Local residents determine the specific needs addressed by each center. Services are not necessarily performed on site; they may be coordinated by the center and performed elsewhere in the community. Each center is coordinated by a resident from the community. And a board of local residents along with representatives from the regional enterprise community share responsibility for managing and defining services.

CSRA centers offer a broad scope of services. The wide range of assistance that they offer includes a micro enterprise fund to provide loans for self-employment ventures, GED classes, youth leadership training, small business development, job readiness assistance, and counseling on housing. Centers soon will offer training in community organizing and leadership for the families who receive services, to strengthen families' skills in taking control of their own lives, helping other families, and addressing community issues.

Whether looking at welfare reform or at Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities, federal initiatives increasingly are seeking to ensure the healthy development of children while supporting mothers and fathers as they strive to be good parents, good workers, and active citizens in their communities.

Ann Rosewater, Counselor to the Secretary, United States Department of Health and Human Services, is a former member of the FRCA Board of Directors. She can be reached at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Humphrey Bldg., Rm. 636G, 200 Independence Ave. S.W., Washington, DC 20201, 202/260-9923 (phone), 202/260-3053 (fax).

Our House

by Ann Rosewater

One of the first family support programs I ever visited, nearly a decade ago, was Our House—a bustling, energetic program for teen mothers, located in a housing project in East Baltimore, Maryland. It showed many of the characteristics of innovative community development that we have come to understand in the 1990s as critical to community building in low-income neighborhoods nationwide.

My tour of that program focused on the activities provided, the skills and opportunities offered to the young girls, and the two-generational nature of the effort—recognizing that the teens themselves, like their infants, were in the midst of rapid developmental changes. The program worked by paying attention to the moms, the babies, and their relationship.

Even more compelling was the role that this vital center of energy, opportunity, learning, and relationship building was playing in the community life of the housing project. The project was isolated near a highway; even the nearest basketball court was hard to get to. The program was run not by the department of social services but by the city housing authority.

The director, a housing authority employee, understood the culture of growing up in the project. He knew that taking two apartments out of residential use and turning them into a structured, caring, active environment for teen women was a trade that was more than worthwhile. The program's mentoring, peer-to-peer learning, and development of informal networks of support lasted well beyond the hours spent on-site.

Like the community economic development efforts discussed in these pages, this program was place-based. It recognized and met the need for a location with which people could identify. It fostered in participants a sense of belonging and, ultimately, ownership. It was called Our House—and that was not an accident.

Agri Kids: Kids Learn Values While Strengthening Rural Economy

by William Green

"Bless this well and this crop to come."

More than 50 people stood near a well at the edge of a 10-acre pea field. It was a bright, warm, June morning in Pastoria, a little community north of Pine Bluff, in southeastern Arkansas. They had gathered to bless the new well installed for Agri Kids, an effort to recruit young people into agriculture to help carry on the vital tradition of small farming.

"We thank you for the example of this project," continued Rev. Hank Wilkins IV, pastor of St. James United Methodist Church, leading them in prayer. "Now, bless this well, and this crop to come, that, in turn, others might be blessed also."

Agri Kids: Expert Farmers Teach Kids

Agri Kids was organized by Jimmie Lee Edwards, 61, of nearby Sherrill, an energetic, recently retired agent of the Agricultural Extension Service at the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, to teach children about agriculture and give them a chance to earn money. It began when she helped her grandson, Jamar, with a 4-H gardening project six years ago and has grown from a "kinfolks thing" to a community project that has drawn more than 30 children from a number of communities in the region, many of them from poor families.

Edwards recruited others because they needed help, but also because of her long-time mission to encourage young people to go into agriculture. "It's so vital to our society," she said. "If they don't want to chop and dig, like we do, they can think about the technology side, how to make crops better." Jamar jokes that when his grandmother was encouraging him to have a "hands-on experience, I never knew I would have my hands on so many hoes and rakes."

The children range in age from five to their upper teens, and include both boys and girls. They plant, cultivate, and harvest a variety of peas, sweet potatoes, and several other vegetables, learning the basics of farming on land that Jimmie Lee Edwards and her husband, Jasper, leased and later bought.

Agri Kids participants work from about May to the first frost, usually in October, putting in about three hours at a stretch, often after school and on Saturdays. Each is assigned rows, to teach them individual responsibility and to make it easier to measure their progress. For environmental reasons, and because Edwards wants them to know what vegetables really taste like, they use as few chemicals as possible. The Agri Kids are paid five dollars an hour and get to take much of what they harvest home to their families; they sell some of the produce to neighbors.

Laron Edwards, Jamar's cousin, and secretary of Agri Kids, says they grow vegetables because they know they can't compete with the large farmers in growing traditional crops, which require much acreage and machinery. "We can come out here, plant it, do it by hand, don't have to use big equipment, and we can cultivate it, hoe and rake it, pull cockleburs—we as youth can do that."

Thomas Vaughns, a horticulturist who helped Edwards get started, adds that they chose peas because they're easy to grow and because "you can make good money with them if you do it halfway right."

Collaboration to Promote Farming

With Agri Kids' crops suffering from lack of water, Edwards applied for and got a $3,500 "cost-share" grant from the Arkansas Land and Farm Development Corporation (ALFDC) in Fargo so that a well could be built. Edwards also spent $2,100 of her own money on the Agri Kids well—rather than spending it on her own soybeans and wheat crops, which desperately need irrigation.

ALFDC has worked since 1980 with community organizations and institutions, government agencies, foundations, and private businesses and corporations, to provide a range of opportunities, services, and support to small farmers and others of limited resources throughout the poverty-stricken Delta and much of the state.

ALFDC got an $80,000 grant last year from the Natural Resources Conservation Service, an agency of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, to pass on as cost-share grants to struggling small farmers who need irrigation but can't get money from banks. Edwards is one of eight people to receive grants so far. Thirteen more will receive them soon, and ALFDC hopes to dispense the rest of the $80,000 by the end of the year and then pursue more funds to meet the great need for irrigation.

Calvin R. King Sr., Executive Director of ALFDC, says Edwards's work "goes to the heart of our mission to develop a new generation of small farmers." Many farmers are now in their 60s or older and will soon retire. "We must develop young small farmers if we want to help carry on the vital tradition of small farming in this country," says King. ALFDC and Agri Kids are part of "a collaborative development effort that involves community organizations and institutions, government agencies, local leaders and parents and children, the kind of effort we must have more of if we're going to seriously reach the many people of limited resources in need of our help." ALFDC also helps farmers improve the production capacity of their farms, which improves their incomes.

Edwards and the children are members of ALFDC, which enables them to get training by ALFDC and its partners—such as the University of Arkansas, which helped Edwards develop the farm and conservation plans she needed to qualify for the grant, and donated seed; and the USDA's Farm Service Agency. She also will receive training in bookkeeping. As a member, Agri Kids is tied to a network of small farmer cooperatives that ALFDC helps to market crops. They participate in "field days" at the organization's 260-acre demonstration farm.

The turnout at Agri Kids' ceremony to bless the well tells a lot about the project's collaborative roots: A long line of cars and trucks bordered Agri Kids' neat, plowed fields of peas, watermelon, and cantaloupe. There were parents and other relatives of the children; representatives of ALFDC, the university, the Cooperative Extension Service, and various USDA agencies; State Sen. Jean Edwards; and others from the community.

Agri Kids Become Successful Adults

Several of the project's early participants now are in their 20s, and many have gone on to high achievement in college. Rickey

Jordan (Edwards calls him "a favorite son"), did much of the plowing with his tractor this year; another hitched a disk to his four-wheeler to help; one became especially adept at ripping out cockleburs, sinewy thistles that rob plants of sun and nutrition. Edward's grandson Jamal now is president of Agri Kids and a fourth-generation farmer.

Rogerich Paylor, 23, joined Agri Kids in his teens and went on to graduate with honors from Morehouse College in Atlanta. He says the project taught him to appreciate work, how to discipline himself, and how to be responsible—values that got him through his first year in medical school in Little Rock, when he had to study "15, 16 hours a day." He spent this summer as in intern at the Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit.

Jamar, who will be in the 10th grade next year, knows what he wants to be: "An agronomist," he says with a big smile. "I believe if I stick with it, I can do it."

William Green, of Little Rock, Arkansas, is a longtime reporter who has worked in federal, state and local antipoverty programs and is a communications consultant for private, nonprofit organizations. He can be reached at 501/664-2821 (phone), or at wgreen3660@aol.com (e-mail).

Arkansas Land and Farm Development Corporation can be reached at Route 2, Box 291, Brinkley, AR 72201, 501/734-1140.

Cultivating a Generation of Winners

Edwards (right foreground), Stephens (of ALFDC, left background), and some of the Agri Kids flank the pipe that will carry 600 gallons per minute to irrigate peas and other vegetables.

Edwards (with hoe) for years has encouraged young people to consider agriculture because "it's so vital to our society."

Paylor, a former Agri Kids participant who graduated from college with honors and is going to medical school, said the project taught him values that have helped him achieve as a student.

Photos by William Green.

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Community Rebuilding: Something Important Is Happening

By Lisbeth Schorr

Current community rebuilding efforts add up to an extraordinary social development with stunning implications for the future.[1] A careful look at the evidence, from both research and experience, suggests that these efforts deserve far more attention than they have been getting. The evidence suggests we know enough about what works in putting together effective interventions in targeted neighborhoods that we could make comprehensive place-based interventions into a promising response to the deepest problems of America's inner cities.

Successful systematic efforts to change the circumstances of life in the inner city have several common elements that are now widely agreed upon.

The Elements of Successful Community-Rebuilding Initiatives

1. Successful initiatives combine action in the economic, service, education, physical development and community-building domains. The hallmark of the new community initiatives is the determination to go beyond fixing individual problems. They set out "to foster a fundamental transformation of poor neighborhoods, and of the circumstances and opportunities of individuals and families who live there." They reflect the conviction that past efforts have been fundamentally flawed because they attempted to address the many problems clustered among people in poverty just one problem at a time.

Even service agencies were finding that services alone could not respond to many families' most urgent needs. A 1991 survey of member agencies of Family Services of America found that while the problems contributing to family distress overwhelmingly included housing, crime, poverty, and difficulties at school, agencies responded by offering the families psychological counseling nearly 90 percent of the time.

There are signs that more and more communities all over the country are beginning to respond to deteriorating neighborhood conditions by blurring the sharp divisions among prevailing categorical programs and among prevailing ideological divides. Earlier arguments between the adherents of economic versus behavioral explanations, and between service-based or opportunity-based remedies, are beginning to subside as more people come to see these arguments as unproductive and the either/or choices as moot. More recognize that the well-being of children, families, and communities are inseparable. People most concerned about the inadequate economic-opportunity structure, and people most concerned about individual inadequacies that make it impossible for those left behind to take advantage of whatever opportunities are available, are beginning to see it is no more productive to be blind to one as to the other.

The hallmark of the new community initiatives is the determination to go beyond fixing individual problems.

More and more initiatives are adopting a broad, non-categorical, non-ideological, comprehensive approach. The leaders of these initiatives may argue endlessly about how comprehensive an array of activities an initiative has to be committed to in order to call itself comprehensive, but the crucial common principle seems to be that they all share a comprehensive mind-set.

They distinguish between a comprehensive mind-set and a comprehensive mandate. A comprehensive mandate from the funder, which includes a laundry list of separate programs and activities that the nascent initiative is expected to launch all at once, is not only overwhelming to staffs and boards but makes it impossible to respond to community needs and demands as they emerge. Harold Richman, director of the Chapin Hill Center for Children and co-chair of the Roundtable for Comprehensive Community Initiatives, says that a comprehensive mandate can paralyze an initiative, force it into excessively lengthy planning, or lead it to function at such a superficial level that it is entirely ineffective just so it can say, yes, at least we've picked something from column A, something from column B, and something from column C.

The most promising initiatives all use—and are encouraged by their funders to use—a comprehensive lens as they survey both problems and opportunities. They all understand the necessity and the effectiveness of working simultaneously on economic and physical development, service and educational reform, and community building. But they are strategic in choosing where to begin, in sequencing their activities, and in how much they take on at once.

2. Successful initiatives rely on a community's own resources and strengths as the foundation for designing change initiatives. Successful community-based change initiatives reflect the specific assets, needs, institutional relationships, and power structures of individual communities. There is no model of neighborhood transformation that could be applied everywhere. Designing the

neighborhood change effort to fit individual communities is closely linked to the process of community building.

Community building, which has become such an important element of effective community initiatives, is more an orientation than a technique, more a mission than a program, more an outlook than an activity. It catalyzes a process of change grounded in local life and priorities. Community building addresses the developmental needs of individuals, families, and organizations within the neighborhood. It changes the nature of the relationship between the neighborhood and the systems outside its boundaries. A community's own strengths—whether they are found in churches, clock clubs, local leadership, or its problem-solving abilities—are seen as central. Community building is based on the belief that inner-city residents and institutions can and must be primary actors in efforts to solve the problems of their neighborhoods.

In her report on community building for the Rockefeller Foundation, Joan Walsh emphasizes that the community building movement is resolutely inclusive and multiracial. She sees it as ". . . as much an attempt to complete the business of the civil rights movement as of the War on Poverty."

The meanings of community building are and will continue to be many and varied. They include efforts to create "a political impact on large impersonal forces," as the Empowerment Zones are trying to do to make up for the loss of industrial jobs, and as DSNI was able to stop Boston trash haulers from dumping trash in its neighborhood. They also include efforts to enhance "the capacity of individuals to believe that they can change the course of their own lives by their own efforts," as when neighborhood residents make decisions as part of a neighborhood governance entity. They all have in common the recognition that because the problems of individuals and families from the inner city did not arise in isolation from neighborhood conditions, addressing these problems requires strengthening the norms, supports, and problem-solving resources that link individuals to one another and to institutions of their community. They all agree, in the words of one community activist, that "community building is the long-term agenda of building the capacity in these communities to take on whatever agenda pops up."

They seek to increase community effectiveness in securing public and private goods and services allocated from outside the neighborhood on grounds of equity and expanding opportunity, as a means of empowering the community as a whole, and to assure that the neighborhood's residents will be prepared for employment, parenting, and otherwise to function in mainstream society.

Community building activities focus on rebuilding the social fabric of the neighborhood to provide residents with the benefits of community, which John Gardner defines as "security, a sense of identity and belonging, a framework of shared assumptions and values, a network of caring individuals, the experience of being needed ... and responding to need." The strategies for operationalizing this goal vary, but all "aim to increase the density of social interaction and communication in the service of neighborhood improvement."

More and more communities all over the country are beginning to respond to deteriorating neighborhood conditions by blurring the sharp divisions among prevailing categorical programs and among prevailing ideological divides.

Efforts to reduce social disorder and physical "incivilities," such as broken windows, trash, public drinking, and prostitution, are also part of community building. They are undertaken in the expectation of improving directly the quality of neighborhood life and of discouraging potential offenders who may be deterred by the knowledge that residents are battling deterioration and are not indifferent to what goes on in the neighborhood.

Effective community building activities often bring the social control and nurturance that can compete with gangs as a basis for social organization for young people. By connecting adults with one another and with youth, community-building activities such as mentoring and organized supervision of afterschool and nighttime educational and recreational programs are able to strengthen informal social controls by building an extensive set of obligations, expectations, and social networks.

3. Successful initiatives draw extensively on outside resources, including public and private funds, professional expertise, and new partnerships that bring clout and influence. If there seems to be a contradiction between relying on a local community's own resources and strengths while drawing on outside resources, the paradox is more apparent than real.

Many problems facing inner-city residents arise from powerful economic forces and from deficiencies in key public systems that originate far beyond the borders of distressed communities. That is why these neighborhoods cannot turn themselves around without being able to draw on funding, experience, expertise, and influence from outside the neighborhood.

The alternative to leaving depleted neighborhoods entirely on their own is not to revert back to a discredited model of dictating change from the top down. Effective interventions aimed at transforming neighborhoods require a new relationship between insiders and outsiders that allows for the flow of information and wisdom to go in both directions.

Potential sources of outside help are trying to get beyond past misunderstandings about what they can usefully contribute. Many had earlier taken a posture that implied, "If you don't want us to tell you what to do, OK, we're out of here. If you reject our mandates, we won't offer you our wisdom. If you reject our agenda, we won't offer you our assistance." Outsiders are learning that while there is very little that they can usually mandate, they have a great deal to offer in a two-way relationship.

Among the most useful functions that outsiders are now performing in support of community-based initiatives are the following:

• **They provide funding**. They aim to make their money available in amount and under conditions that are reasonably related to the objectives to be achieved. That means making funds available early in the process, and for a sufficiently long and predictable period. It also means making funding available in support of non-categorical activities (such as management, planning, and interdisciplinary training).

• **They provide clout** that can remove or reduce obstacles (political, bureaucratic, regulatory) that have interfered with the design and implementation of a coherent set of interventions. Outsiders can offer political influence and connections to decision makers, inaccessible to purely bottom-up efforts, especially in mobilizing additional resources.

• **They provide technical assistance.** They may help initiatives to arrange training for staff in community building, new forms of professional practice, and program management. They are able to mobilize and broker needed expertise, especially when it falls within a single domain.

There is a broad consensus around the three common elements of successful community initiatives I have just described. I believe that successful initiatives also share a fourth element, one around which there is less consensus:

4. Effective initiatives are designed and operated on the basis of one or more plausible theories of change. Plausible theories of change cover a wide range of possibilities, but all connect activities or interventions with important outcomes. Systematic collections of theories of change illuminate what is worth doing, shed light on promising ways to sequence efforts, can suggest what is not worth doing, and help participants to inject intentionality and purpose into their activities.

Says one CCI director, enunciating a plausible theory of change, "I've really come to believe that jobs are the key, and that everything we do has to be organized around pathways to work— pathways that start as far back as prenatal care and school readiness, but that ultimately connect up with increasing the number of young adults that are productively employed."

Another plausible theory of change is one distilled by an evaluator of several comprehensive community-based initiatives. She has concluded that direct interventions to control violence and disorder and to assure public safety are not only essential to successful community building, but must be put in place at an early stage, because violence and disorder often produce barriers of distrust among neighbors, prevent families from entering into the life of the community, and drive out the middle-class home owners and elderly residents who may be left in a deteriorating neighborhood. By reducing neighborhood violence and disorder it is possible to increase parental effectiveness and resident participation, lower the stress and uncertainty of daily life, and increase the economic viability of the area by making it more attractive to investors.

Community building is based on the belief that inner-city residents and institutions can and must be primary actors in efforts to solve the problems of their neighborhoods.

Another theory of change found in many community-building activities: When residents of depleted neighborhoods undertake activities that perceptibly change the conditions of their lives (getting a new traffic light installed or closing down the hated trash-transfer stations), they gain a sense of increased "intentionality," the conviction that they can change the course of their lives by their own efforts. That increases their effectiveness as parents, helps them support their children's efforts to succeed at school, and is more likely to make them part of an informal social networks that build social capital.

Another plausible theory of change connects improved outcomes for adolescents, including lower rates of teenage childbearing and youth crime, and higher rates of school success, with schools that maintain high standards, offer youngsters diverse opportunities to learn and to succeed, and provide them with opportunities to form sustained and trusting relationships with caring adults.

A last example of a plausible theory of change has to do with the intensity and scope of the intervention. Many informed observers believe that to transform communities of concentrated disadvantage, investments and strategies for change must be mobilized at a high level of intensity. They believe that interventions applied in the usual small doses are unlikely to be effective. Wrote Herbert Stein, chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers in the Nixon and Ford administrations: "The streets may need to become not a little safer, but much safer before investment is attracted [to depleted neighborhoods]. A big program may be much more effective per dollar and per unit of effort than a little one."

Each of these theories is, of course, totally compatible with the others, and all five could be utilized by a single initiative. All five are plausible, and therefore useful.

Progress among community initiatives would occur more rapidly and more predictably if people working in individual neighborhoods could draw on a rich collection of rigorous knowledge, gleaned from both research and experience. Such a knowledge base could help local people in making judgments to distinguish plausible from implausible theories, promising from unpromising theories, and likely from unlikely links between activities and outcomes.

It is extremely important for the further development of comprehensive community initiatives that the most knowledgeable and thoughtful participants and observers of the process not shy away from trying to uncover and synthesize as much information as possible—and then draw generalizations from it. The funders, designers, and operators of these initiatives should be able to draw on the greatest possible body of relevant and accessible knowledge so that their own local decision making becomes as highly informed and strategic as it is possible to make it.

Notes

This article excerpted with the publisher's permission from Schorr, L. B. (1997). *Common purpose: Strengthening families and neighborhoods to rebuild America*. New York: Doubleday. 359-368. Available from FRCA, 312/338-0900.

Job Skills Aren't Enough

Success Leaving Welfare Means Work Skills and Family Support

by John F. Else

Jane Smith has been doing carpentry "on the side" for some time, but since enrolling in the Institute for Social and Economic Development's (ISED) business training, she has made home repair into a full-time business. Soon she will be earning enough to leave welfare. The training taught her how to bid on jobs so that she covers not just her direct labor, but all of the associated indirect time, overhead costs, and unanticipated risks. After finishing today's job, she goes home and fixes dinner for the kids. Her abusive husband, from whom she is separated, stops by; an argument ensues, and he beats her and steals her tools from her pick-up.

Sally Jones has just landed her first contract with a company—to provide 15-minute, in-office neck and shoulder massages at a law firm. She is thrilled: this contract will provide a solid stream of income and could open the door to other firms, and she will soon be able to say good-bye to welfare. That night she visits a friend to share the good news. When she leaves her friend's home after a hour, her car—with her $600 massage stool in it—is missing. She suspects her boyfriend, who has a key to her car, of taking the car and her equipment.

When individuals are successful in their movement toward economic independence, they grow in self-confidence and personal independence. However, as the vignettes above illustrate, their belief in themselves and their ability to make it in the world of work is often frightening and threatening to friends and family. Sabotage by partners—as well as other family members, friends, and neighbors—is a common response to the success and increasing independence of women who have been welfare-dependent.

Partners, family, and friends often feel neglected as a woman focuses more and more of her time and energy on her business or her work. They fear the loss of her companionship if she doesn't "need" them anymore. As they observe changes in her posture, her walk, the way she dresses, and what she talks about, they feel like she is becoming a different person, and they fear that this new person will not feel the same about them.

Furthermore, they may experience her success as an implicit judgment on their lack of success. The unspoken message they project as coming from her is, "If I can make it, why don't you get out and do something for yourself?"

The Institute for Social and Economic Development (ISED) assists individuals and families in developing microenterprises to enable them to be economically self-sufficient. ISED has learned from experience that successful community economic development involves both (1) recognition of the need to address self-esteem and other personal issues of individuals who engage in business development and employment activities (2) awareness of and ability to cope with the interpersonal tidal waves set in motion by people's transitions to economic independence. Moving into the economic mainstream is often a huge step for an individual. It requires that individuals deal with their own family histories, personal patterns, and "scripts." It also has impacts on family systems and community systems. This article will share how ISED's business development staff, partly through linkages with family support agencies, has addressed both the personal issues and larger system issues of those seeking to leave welfare.

Linkages with Family Support Resources

Policymakers and professionals struggle with questions of how to tie business development and employment services to family support services. Some believe that the basic orientations and professional skills needed for the two functions are similar, and that the same professional can provide both services. But ISED's experience with microenterprise development shows that the two are quite different, and that while the skills of economic development staff and those of social services staff must be coordinated, they must be kept separate.

ISED forms linkages with family support resources in the communities it serves. ISED has a statewide program operated from six branch offices and a network of consultants, and in two regions it has operated demonstration programs with family support agencies. Every participant in the microenterprise training received intensive family support services. Although funding for that partnership ended several years ago, ISED tries to ensure that trainers in all areas of the state are familiar with the resources in each community and that they have made personal contact so that the family support agency is aware of the microenterprise program. Consequently, they are able to make referrals effectively when they see a need.

Microenterprise Training: What Is It?

Most participants in ISED's microenterprise training program are welfare recipients and other low-income individuals who would rather work for themselves than for someone else. Unfortunately, they have little exposure to business ownership or management. They need a training program that helps them transform their dreams into financially feasible business plans. They need to start with the most basic business concepts and move through defining their market, researching the market, analyzing the likely income and expenses, developing cash flow and profit and loss projections, determining the minimal capital needs required for operating the business effectively, and preparing a marketing plan. While many organizations offer one-day business seminars, there are few sources for this kind of comprehensive training.

Participants need a strengths-oriented, adult education approach to training that demystifies business and helps people discover (or rediscover) their knowledge and skills. The circumstances that created their current financial distress have often resulted in a loss of self-esteem and self-confidence. The most important ingredient to building self-esteem and self-confidence is having successes. ISED's training curriculum has a series of exercises and homework assignments that give participants a chance to discover how much they know

Photo courtesy Institute for Social and Economic Development

and to demonstrate what they can do. For example, by the time they have finished their business plans, the participants have prepared profit and loss projections and cash flow projections—documents that most MBAs and even most business owners could not prepare.

The training also encourages participants to examine their own financial management and to make plans—as practice for the financial management of their businesses. It requires participants to be realistic. If they want financing, they know they will have to defend their business plan before a commercial banker and demonstrate an ability to follow it.

Most important, the trainers convey from the first day their belief that the participants are competent human beings who are capable of being business owners. I have observed "job readiness" training programs in which the trainer explains the importance of personal hygiene and proper clothes, and yet engages participants in exercises that are supposed to increase self-esteem. It struck me that nothing is more damaging to self-esteem than to assume that people do not know how to bathe and dress properly. Though there are exceptions, of course, ISED's experience is that when people have a series of successes, their self-esteem is restored and that self-esteem is then reflected in how they care for and present themselves.

Role of the Business Trainer

Microenterprise programs vary in their expectations of the role of trainers. Some programs expect their trainers to be both business developers and social workers. That is not ISED's model. ISED expects its staff to be highly skilled business trainers who are sensitive to the needs of the special populations we serve and committed to helping them succeed as business owners. The trainers often go beyond the traditional responsibilities of a trainer. They often discuss personal problems with participants and help them think about solutions. The trainers usually have considerable life experience, including both successes and failures, to share with the participants. Most important, however, ISED selects trainers who are going to bring business expertise to the participants. We select people who have owned small businesses themselves and have struggled personally with the very issues that the participants will be addressing. Though we expect the trainers to be sensitive and committed to the participants, they are not trained nor expected to be family support workers.

Conclusion

Community economic development results in complex transitions for individuals, and these have impacts on their partners, children, extended families, and friends. Their responses often undermine the efforts of business development and employment programs. The success of these programs depends on their taking into account not only the special needs of the people they serve, but also the social contexts within which they live. This can be done both in the design of the programs themselves and in their linkages, formal and informal, to family support resources in the community.

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MIHOW Outreach Workers

Mothers in Poverty Gain Skills and Help Each Other

By Judy Matthews-Taylor, Barbara Clinton, and Carole Manny

Once labeled a "slow learner" and placed in special education classes, Pat Haynes now leads a county-wide immunization drive and presents workshops on self-esteem. The first African American to graduate from her local community college as a licensed practical nurse, Minnie Bommer also was the first woman elected to her city council. With two small children to raise alone, Diane Wynn took night classes for eight years to gain an associate's degree, and now is pursuing her bachelor's. Beginning as a clerical worker at an Appalachian clinic, Kem Short has become a licensed social worker and dedicated community activist, organizing a large-scale semi-annual gathering of mountain women.

The common thread uniting these women is that, prior to these achievements, each was recruited by MIHOW—the Maternal and Infant Health Outreach Worker project.[1] Building on their energy, talent, and commitment, MIHOW trains local women to teach their peers about prenatal care, infant development, and related topics through a home visiting program. Because MIHOW outreach workers know their rural communities well, care about helping people, and are experienced mother, they are an ideal support system for mothers who are poor, stressed, or geographically and socially isolated.

Indigenous Women—a Powerful Resource

MIHOW recognized that despite the poverty of rural Appalachian and Mississippi's Delta communities, indigenous local women are a great untapped resource. In fact, building local leadership is the foundation of the MIHOW program model for community development.[2] The MIHOW program helps women improve the health and development of mothers and children in low-income rural families. Empowerment of individuals—outreach workers, family members, and local program directors—leads to community empowerment. This "can-do" attitude often broadens to embrace issues such as the environment, economic conditions, and people's ability to control their lives through individual advocacy and community action.

Minnie Bommer became aware of the serious lack of services in her community for low-income children with disabilities after beginning her work with MIHOW. On her own time, she worked with a committee of concerned parents to start an agency, Children and Family Services, for this population. Later, when the clinic sponsoring MIHOW in Haywood County lost it federal funding and was closed, Children and Family Services assumed sponsorship of the MIHOW project, allowing services to continue uninterrupted. Bommer became the first woman elected to the city Board of Alderman in Covington, then went on to serve children at the state level as a member of the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth, and chair of the Early Childhood Planning Committee of the State Board of Education.

Outreach workers recruited by MIHOW, then, are a familiar with their community and its informal helping network and are likely to know or hear about high-risk pregnant women. They have the personality, experience, and reputation that enable them to reach out to others, to be seen as knowledgeable mothers and trustworthy confidantes.

Numerous studies cite the reasons for using paraprofessionals in working with hard-to-reach populations. These include the peer-to-peer relationship built on shared background, empathy and credibility with families, knowledge of local conditions and customs, and the benefits to the individual and community. A 1994 study compared the effectiveness of home visitors in the Norfolk Resource Mother's Program with a traditional, clinic-based program using health professions. The home visitors reached a higher percentage of the high-risk adolescents, promoted a higher level of prenatal care, and produced pregnancy outcomes comparable to the professionals.[3]

Since MIHOW provides extensive training and the outreach workers are supervised locally, there are no specific educational requirements, although some do have professional degrees. Their experiences in MIHOW often provide the self-esteem and the motivation for them to continue their education.

Diane Wynn was hired as a full-time home visitor at a western Tennessee site. She attributes her personal and professional growth to this opportunity. "My experience as a home visitor gave me more awareness of what was out there in the community, what could be accessed. It helped me decide on my work goals."

Caring about the families she served was an important motivation for her to attend college. "Being a MIHOW outreach worker gave me more awareness of what I didn't know," she said. Wynn's desire to learn more about people with low self-esteem led her to study of psychology at Dyersburg State Community College, for which she received an associate's degree last spring. "I probably wouldn't have gone to college if I hadn't worked as a home visitor. It was a stepping-stone." Wynn plans to return to school this fall to pursue a bachelor's degree at the University of Memphis.[4]

Wynn's growth is similar to that of her peers, as noted by Gingman in a review of training for MIHOW outreach workers.:

> *[T]heir experiences had mean increased confidence in themselves and their abilities. For most there was less isolation and more interaction with other people. They all talked about personal growth and seemed to have an expanded sense of themselves and what they might do. Each woman also spoke in some way of an increased sense of being able to help other people and contribute to the community and of commitment to do this.*[5]

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Photo courtesy MIHOW

Training as a Community Development Technique

MIHOW recognizes that the continuing professional development of its outreach workers strengthens the individual, the program, and the community. Thus, monthly in-service training, continuing education, and career advancement opportunities are all important components.

As a major part of the effort to enable women to think and act for themselves, MIHOW trainers model the behavior that they hope to encourage in outreach workers and participant mothers. Therefore, MIHOW training sessions are designed to be democratic, collaborative, inclusive, flexible, and creative. Going beyond rote learning, MIHOW training emphasizes skill building in communication and active listening, and encourages the outreach workers to become partners in the learning and teaching by sharing their own experiences and strategies. Through this training approach, outreach workers can increase self-esteem, enhance interpersonal skills, and begin a career development path.

After MIHOW's spring 1996 training, one outreach worker commented, "This was my first training of this kind and I found it motivating and educational. I loved every minute." Said another, "I was impressed at the intelligence of each leader and speaker, along with them being down-to-earth people." Most of the trainers were from the MIHOW network—outreach workers, VISTA Volunteers, or staff—rather than outside "experts."

Benefit to the Community

A direct benefit of the MIHOW program to the community's socioeconomic development involves the families the home visitors reach. The local investment in children's health and educational environment will have significant payoffs in later school and work success, adding to the strength of the community generation by generation. As Diane Wynn expresses it, "The information that we [outreach workers] give helps the community. By starting with the health of children, you impact the community as a whole. Children will grow up to run that community."

The evidence supporting the long-term benefits to the local populations MIHOW serves is anecdotal, but plentiful. The underlying theme is heightened sense of potential for oneself and for the community. "If you better yourself, you will better your community," says Wynn. "You might go on to be a city council member of another kind of community leader. Working with families makes you more aware of yourself and your community."

A similar personal and professional transformation has taken place for Kem Short. Beginning as a clerical worker at Tug River Health Association in Gary, Short's interest in families and children led her to apply for an outreach worker position. She was hired in 1982, and since that time has earned a social work degree and has become and ICEA-certified childbirth educator. Her supervisor, Frankie Patton Rutherford, has witnessed at close hand the positive changes in Short's life—changes that affect the community as a whole. She observes, "Kem's self-esteem has really developed and she has become an empowered woman and an enabler of other women. Where I have seen the most growth with Kem is around the whole are of social justice and her avid belief that all people deserve a minimum standard of living and her willingness to work and fight for that."

Pay Haynes, the "slow learner," eventually came into contact with the MIHOW Director of Mercy Mission in Middlesboro, Kentucky, Mark East, and his wife Angela, a registered nurse. The couple recognized Haynes as an indigenous healer with sensitivity, a love of children, and an understanding of the community. They, along with others at Mercy Mission, convinced Haynes to work with families in their MIHOW program.

Haynes began as a VISTA, receiving training in health education, child development, and parenting skills. She discovered her natural ability to teach others and found it easy to relate to the mothers she helps. "I meet moms that are down and out like I was in the past, with nobody to talk to." A former abused wife, Haynes tells the mothers she works with, "I've been kicked. I've been beaten. I've been through the welfare system just like you have, but I came out of that, and you can, too." Pat Haynes is now a full-time home visitor who ended her two-year VISTA service by leading an inspirational MIHOW training workshop on self-esteem entitled "Color Me Proud, Strong, and Capable." She received a standing ovation.[6]

Notes

[1] There are 18 MIHOW sites located in Arkansas, Kentucky, Tennessee, and West Virginia. This network of community-based organizations works in partnership with each other and with the Center for Health Services at Vanderbilt University, which provides training and technical support to get programs started, then provides ongoing assistance. Each project, however, must be "owned" and sponsored by a local, grassroots agency.

[2] Clinton, B., and M. Lamer (1988) "Rural community women as leaders in health outreach." *Journal of Primary Prevention* 9(1/2):120-129.

[3] Julnes, G., M. Komefal, W. Pindur, and P. Kim (1994) "Community-based perinatal care for disadvantaged adolescents: Evaluation of the Resource Mother Program." *Journal of Community Health* 19(1): 41-53.

[4] Wynn, D. (1997) Telephone interview, June 12.

[5] Bingman, M. (1991) Mountain women learning. Unpublished manuscript.

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Groceries and Job Training for a Community

Highland Food Cooperative Is Part of Family Services Continuum

Highland Food Cooperative
Program of The Highland Family Resource Center

Highland Food Cooperative assists families in Gastonia, N.C., in meeting two major needs: jobs and food. The cooperative fills out a menu of programs offered by the Highland Family Resource Center (HFRC), which enables Highland community residents who receive public assistance to become economically self-sufficient.

A dedicated board of directors—representatives from local government agencies, churches, businesses, and organizations, one third of them residing in the Highland community—and other community leaders conceived the idea of a community a grocery store that would provide opportunities for job training and earning groceries through a "sweat equity program." They hired a store manager/job developer to implement the program, and on October 12, 1996, the cooperative held an open house attended by more than 300 people, including many dignitaries and legislators. Media coverage was extensive, with one local TV station carrying the story for four days.

The Highland Family Resource Center (HFRC) is funded by the North Carolina Department of Human Resources/Division of Child Development. This neighborhood of 6,250 households was chosen as the site of the co-op because there is little community infrastructure (such as clinics, banks, grocery stores, transportation, etc.). Since 1993 HFRC's mission has been to support and strengthen Highland families and other participants by collaborating with existing agencies to ensure that families receive comprehensive services; HFRC's holistic model of service addresses education, employment, health, housing, and skills training.

Food and Job Training

The Highland Food Cooperative currently is open Monday through Friday from one to five o'clock p.m., and stocks only canned goods. But the long-term goal is to become a full-scale grocery store. North Carolina Harvest donates perishable foods (e.g., potatoes, vegetables, fruits, bagels, etc.) for the co-op to distribute free to its target community, and the co-op has been approached by other food distributors who wish to do the same.

The Highland Food Cooperative's Sweat Equity Program functions as on-the-job training. Over a two-week period, participants learn managerial skills and how to operate the cash register, stock shelves, and take inventory. They earn $15 worth of groceries for every three hours they work at the store. During this time, the store manager contacts local businesses to ask about job openings, to get the names of contact people, and to find out, for example, how many hours of cash register training someone would need to work in a particular store. When the participants have completed their training, the manager assists them in locating employment. To date, 17 people have been placed in jobs at grocery stores, department stores, etc., after completing the program.

In addition to job skills, participants acquire other skills they will need to become marketable. The store manager conducts job readiness workshops in which participants develop skills in writing résumés and thank-you letters, dressing for interviews, etc. The manager also provides emotional support, escorting some participants to job interviews and following up with everyone who gets a job to offer help. On occasion, a trainer from the Employment Security Commission provides supplemental instruction on job search skills and placement.

Part of a Range of Services

HFRC also offers:

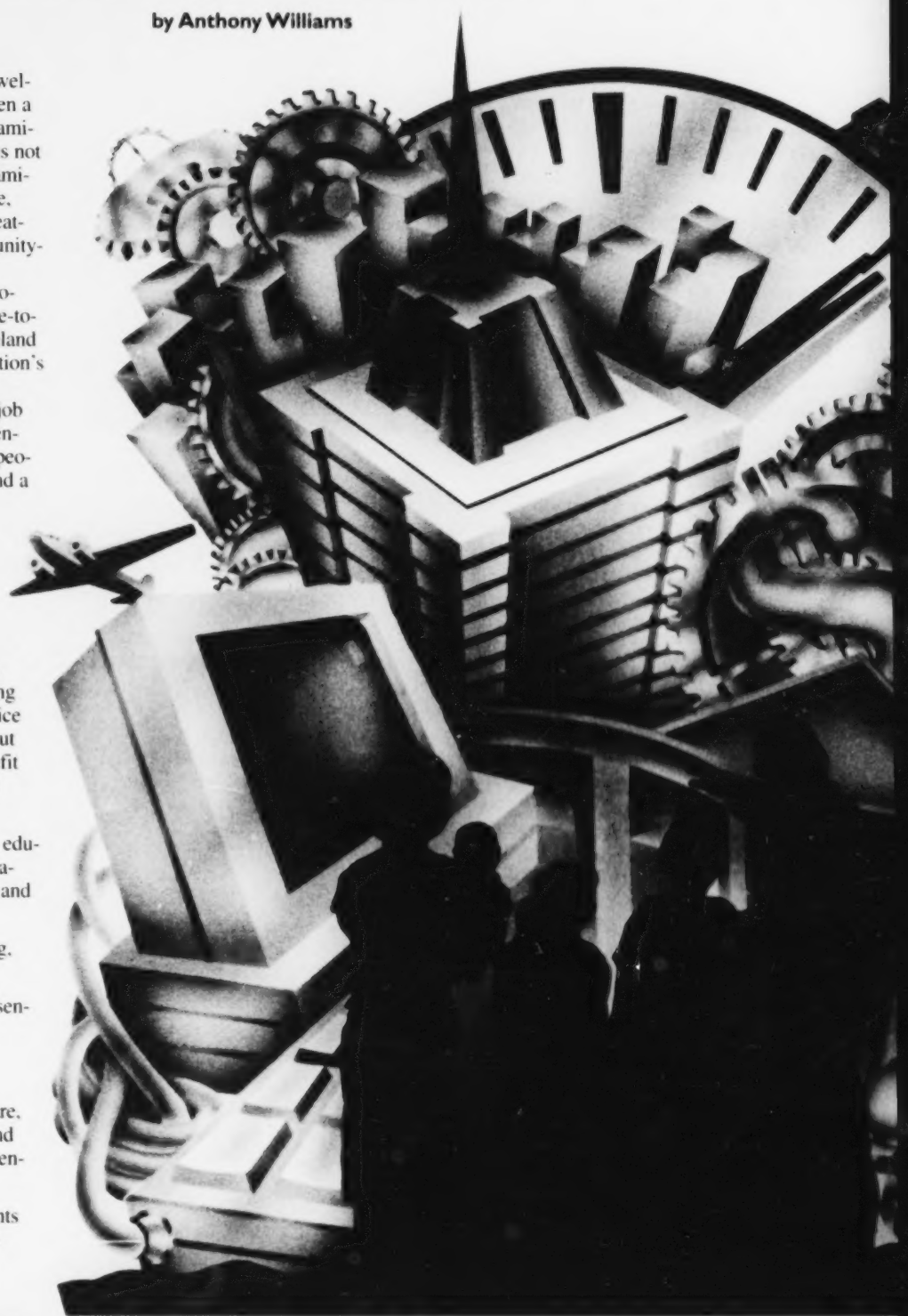
- **Transportation services:** Participants receive rides to doctor's clinics, grocery stores, job interviews, GED classes, the Employment Security Commission, job sites, and other places.
- **Drop-In Center:** Children participate in well-planned, developmentally appropriate activities while their parents are participating in programs and services at HFRC.
- **Computer Classes:** Participants learn basic computer skills, how to type (keyboarding), and how to use different software packages.
- **Office Skills Training:** Participants learn how to file and answer the phone, and how to use office machinery like stamp meters, photocopiers, and fax machines.
- **Healthy Lifestyle Workshops:** A nurse provides health education workshops and conducts support and wellness groups, well check-ups, and home visits.
- **Adolescent Substance Abuse Prevention Program:** A substance abuse educator meets with high school students every Monday after school to them teach about the consequences of drug use, how to abstain from drugs, and how to cope with peer pressure.
- **GED Classes:** Tutors from Gaston College provide tutoring in English, Math, Science, History and Literature from 10 am to 12 p.m., Monday through Friday.
- **Life Skills Workshops:** In collaboration with local agencies, workshops are provided in parenting, job readiness, budgeting, food and nutrition, stress management, and HIV prevention.
- **Parents' Fun Night:** A family specialist conducts a six week program for parents with children ages 0-5, using the Parents As Teachers curriculum.
- **Special Events/Trips/Outings:** Special activities such as trips for children and parents, family activities, and traditional seasonal events are planned throughout the year.

For more information, contact Highland Family Resource Center, 301 N. Highland Street, Gastonia, NC 28052.

Focus on Whole Family Makes Welfare-to-Work Succeed

Cleveland Works, Ohio

by Anthony Williams



Since the introduction of federal welfare reform legislation, it has been a credo of many who work with families that success in the workplace relies not just on job skills, but on support for families, including help accessing childcare, transportation, and substance abuse treatment, and strategies to address community-wide problems.

One program in particular helps advocates of a more comprehensive welfare-to-work approach make their case: Cleveland Works. Part of the Clinton Administration's welfare-to-work partnership program, Cleveland Works delivers "one-stop" job training, job placement, and comprehensive family services free of charge to people seeking permanent employment and a higher quality of life. The program provides area employers with trained workers to fill their job openings. Many of these employers also underwrite the expenses of on-the-job training.

Cleveland Works participants take part in multiple skill-building services and activities throughout the day. Going to the program each day is good practice in itself; participants who have been out of the work force for a long time benefit from getting into a routine. Cleveland Works offers:

- Job preparation (job readiness, basic education, personal development, occupational skills, business skills training, and customized training)
- Legal services (education, counseling, and advocacy)
- A pre-trial diversion and alternative sentencing project (for unemployed or marginally employed adult felony offenders)
- Family development (on-site childcare, information on child development and family management issues, and preventative health care education)

Cleveland Works provides participants with something that is as important as these program components, although you won't find it on any list:

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Participants develop a sense of the "big picture" and their own role in determining the futures of their families. Whether getting help navigating the legal system or registering to vote (Cleveland Works leads the area in conducting voter registration), participants become empowered to determine what they can do to produce desireable outcomes for themselves, their families, and their communities—and to take action based on those plans.

The program is built on the notion that people want to work—and will, given the properly structured opportunity. Executive director David Roth says Cleveland Works is "dedicated to doing whatever it takes to help all kinds of people 'work' their way out of poverty and achieve a better life through full-time employment with good wages and health benefits."

As of July 1997:

- 7,803 welfare recipients have enrolled in Cleveland Works
- 5,555 (71 percent) have completed the required training regimen
- 9,559 jobs have been posted with Cleveland Works by over 650 employers in the Greater Cleveland area
- 2,400 of the program's graduates (45 percent) have been hired
- Most importantly, eight out of 10 program graduates hired did not return to public assistance

Despite the encouraging statistics, Cleveland Works does not define its success by quantity of placements. Rather, staff and participants focus on measures of employees' quality of life, including experiences with work, family, and the community. In short, the success of the employee depends on the success of his or her family and community. If evaluation of a participating family does not show that family is better off, then the program has not succeeded.

The program seeks to provide its programs to anyone who wants to participate. In the beginning, Cleveland Works served any person who walked through its doors. Its initial success attracted various funding streams, which imposed eligibility requirements on participants. The program's response has been to try to diversify its funding base and attract more private sources of capital, including corporate and foundation support.

Turnover is low among Cleveland Works' staff of approximately 20. More than one third are Cleveland Works graduates, and about one half have worked for the organization since its inception. The low turnover and large draw from former participants means Cleveland Works spends less time orienting staff to its approach, and adds continuity and stability to the program's efforts. Moreover, a firm and committed staff contributes to the integration of services and facilitates a more comprehensive response to families.

The Employers

Currently, the demand for employees in Cleveland is greater than the supply of qualified Cleveland Works graduates. Word-of-mouth advertising has been the most effective strategy of recruiting potential employers; employers have told their colleagues of their satisfaction with the hiring graduates of the program.

Cleveland Works treats both program participants and employers as customers. Staff constantly survey employers to learn what skills are in demand; then they tailor their programs to teach those skills. In addition, to reduce risk to employers and to encourage employer participation, Cleveland Works will keep employees on its own payroll during the a three-month period of on-the-job training if the employer is unwilling to underwrite the cost of such training.

Lessons Learned

What can Cleveland Works teach about the nexus between family support and community economic development? Its method of measuring total family helps us answer questions such as "How is success measured?" and "What does progress look like?" with regard to programs involved in both family support and economic development. Cleveland Works shows how a program can place equal value on economic development outcomes and family support outcomes by measuring its success by looking at the betterment of the family.

Cleveland Works sees family support as more than just a means to the end of family self-sufficiency, and it sees economic development as more than just a means to the end of economic self-sufficiency. The program's impact becomes clear when we compare a child growing up in a home with working parents to a child of parents receiving public assistance. It becomes clear when a parent discovers the opportunity and hope afforded by a paycheck.

Anthony Williams is Director of Strategic Planning and Special Projects for the Family Resource Coalition of America.

Microenterprise Development

An Economic Empowerment Strategy for Low-Income Families and Communities

by Salome Raheim

Margaret, a 38-year-old single woman with one child, had been on and off AFDC for more than 11 years before enrolling in a microenterprise development program. At the time of enrollment, her child was 12 years old and AFDC was her primary source of income. Her job was a secondary source of income, and she also received child support.

After completing 14 weeks of business training and a business plan, she opened a video rental store with a $5,000 Self-Employment Investment Demonstration (SEID) loan. Subsequently, she received a $6,000 business loan from a local bank. After five years of operation, her gross business income is $41,000 and expenses total $15,000, leaving a net income of $26,000. She pays herself a regular wage of $750 per month. Her business owns $83,330 in assets, including a $50,000 building, $28,000 of inventory and materials, and $1,400 of equipment. Business liabilities total $41,000.

Margaret says her life is different now than before she enrolled in the microenterprise program and started a business. She finds life financially more rewarding; she can afford items she could not before; she feels much more successful; and her income, housing, relationship with her child, health, and self-esteem are better than before. While prior to the program she did not have much confidence about being able to reach her goals and control her future, she is now confident that she can.

Margaret's experience is similar to that of many individuals who have participated in microenterprise development programs across the United States. Participants have started every imaginable kind of business, including child care, desktop publishing, janitorial services, welding repair, pet shops, and raising piglets. While not every business has been a success story, there are many that have been.

Microenterprise development is among the most innovative strategies currently employed to assist poor families and communities improve their economic well-being. Microenterprise development supports "the creation and strengthening of small business as a strategy to raise incomes, enhance family economic self-sufficiency, create jobs and strengthen local economic development."[1] With origins in developing countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America, this strategy has been implemented in the United States over the last ten years with notable success.[2]

Photo courtesy MHOW

In the United States, a variety of state and federal agencies have funded microenterprise projects, including the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the Department of Labor.[3] Projects have also been funded by private organizations, including the BankAmerica Foundation, The Ford Foundation, the MacArthur Foundation, the Ms. Foundation, and the Charles Steward Mott Foundation.

Currently over 260 organizations in the United States operate microenterprise development programs, including community development corporations, community action organizations, women's economic development organizations, and community colleges. While intervention models differ, programs all include one or more of the following components:

1. Group business training
2. Individual technical assistance with business operations
3. Assistance with securing business financing from local banks or programs' revolving loan funds

Components available in some programs but not in others are family support services (i.e., family development) and peer lending, a group lending option for accessing business capital.[4] Microenterprise

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development programs may focus on creating new businesses through self-employment or other small-scale enterprises (i.e., businesses with five or fewer employees). Programs may also help strengthen or expand existing businesses. The self-employment approach to microenterprise development involves helping individuals create jobs for themselves by starting a business. The business strengthening or growth approach focuses on helping an existing small business to stabilize financially, preventing closure and job loss, and on increasing the income of the entrepreneur and employees. The business expansion approach helps a small business increase its operations to create one or more new jobs.

Studies of microenterprise programs have shown that this strategy can promote the economic empowerment of families, including-those receiving public assistance. Findings from some of these studies are noted below:

Self-employment is a viable economic independence strategy for a small, but important number of low-income and unemployed people.[3] Through self-employment, individuals can create jobs for themselves that generate sufficient income to become independent of public assistance.[4]

Many participants who complete the microenterprise training but do not start their own businesses select other positive paths to economic self-sufficiency, such as wage employment and further education or training).[5]

Businesses begun through self-employment initiatives by low-income people have a higher survival rate than the national average.[6]

Businesses begun through microenterprise initiatives for low-income people have economic development effects, creating or retaining jobs for the owner and additional employees[7]

Social development benefits (i.e., increases in human capital) result from participation in microenterprise development programs. Training components designed to bolster self-esteem and self-confidence are an important component of the business training curriculum.[10] In their evaluations of programs, participants report significant increases in their business knowledge and skills, self-esteem, and their levels of confidence in their abilities to influence outcomes in their lives and their environments.[11]

Self-employment development programs that provide a combination of business training, technical assistance, and assistance with obtaining financing have demonstrated success in facilitating the start and growth of small businesses among disadvantaged groups, especially women and people of color.[12]

Self-employment programs for welfare recipients and other low-income people can increase access to capital through program loan funds and facilitating relationships with local banks.[13]

Microenterprise development promotes asset accumulation. Program participants who open businesses are likely to experience a significant increase their personal and business assets.[14]

AFDC income and asset waivers were an important factor in the ability of AFDC recipients to start businesses. Participants receiving public assistance reported needing waivers to prevent reduction of their grants due to business income and assets acquired during their first year of business operation.[15]

Human service providers and policy makers are challenged now more than ever to pursue strategies that will economically empower low-income families, especially those receiving public assistance. The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 creates an urgent need to identify and implement interventions that will help poor families generate sufficient income to be economically self-sufficient. When tailored to the needs of the population being served, microenterprise development is one strategy that can promote both family and community economic well-being. It deserves the careful attention of those in the human services who are working on behalf of economically disadvantaged people.

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Developing Community and Self-Sufficiency in Public Housing

Omaha Housing Authority

by Joyce Beasley

Children who live in public housing face many challenges to positive outcomes. Depressing economic environments and factors such as drug abuse and gang violence are connected with problems such as low self-image, lack of achievement in school, behavioral problems in and out of the classroom, and high dropout rates. While helping adult residents become economically self-sufficient, the Omaha Housing Authority (OHA), in Omaha, Nebraska, provides positive activities to restore children's and youths' sense of self-worth and help them grow into self-sufficient adults.

The mission of the Omaha Housing Authority (OHA) is to provide good housing to people with low and moderate income, and to provide Omaha residents with the tools that they need to become economically independent. Through empowerment programs, OHA's housing becomes a gateway to opportunity. OHA's philosophy is that children who live in public housing should not become adults who need public housing. OHA stresses education as a vital avenue in the achievement of this goal.

The Omaha Housing Authority currently owns, manages, and operates more than 6,700 public housing units throughout Omaha. In addition, OHA's programs provide opportunities for residents to become economically and socially independent; at the same time, they combat crime, foster education, encourage neighborhood pride, and promote voter registration. The current annual operating budget is $30 million, with $128 million in assets.

The Omaha Housing Authority's programs are centered around several key principles:

- Encouraging parents to assume their responsibility to support their children by preparing for, accepting, and retaining employment
- Providing individuals with the opportunity to acquire the education and skills needed to be employed
- Coordinating with other agencies to provide individuals with a varied "menu" of services and service providers

Omaha Housing Authority

- Providing necessary supportive services to allow individuals to accept employment
- Emphasizing accountability of participants and service providers

The Gateway

A comprehensive array job training programs is tied together through the Gateway, a partnership among OHA, Omaha businesses, foundations, trade unions, institutions of higher education, and the City of Omaha. A 54,000 square feet facility, acquired and equipped through support from the Lozier Corporation, the Economic Development Administration, and the Peter Kiewit Foundation, is considered to be the "gate" leading out of poverty for countless OHA residents. Gateway programs include:

The Door and Window Manufacturing Center

Builds high-quality, custom-made doors, windows, and screens for OHA properties and other public housing authorities throughout the United States. OHA residents are trained and employed by the center, which will become resident-owned by the year 2002.

The Step-Up Program

A year-long, pre-apprenticeship program to provide employment and job training to OHA residents and low-income individuals from targeted communities. Classroom work is followed by on-the-job training at OHA maintenance and construction sites; at the end of the year, the students apply for labor trade union apprenticeships.

Focus Omaha

This collaboration between OHA and Metro Community College is a fast-track program that polishes individual reading and math skills for work in today's marketplace. Additional training is available in basic computer skills and construction arts. Through Focus Omaha, Job Transition Specialists work with local businesses to create employment opportunities for OHA residents and program participants.

Other components of OHA's services include:

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Omaha Housing Authority

LaFern Williams Center and Resident-Relations Department

This community center operated by OHA offers a broad range of activities for adult and child residents of OHA properties. It houses an award-winning community theater, the Center Stage, that offers drama, ballet, ethnic dancing, and video production; a state-of-the-art fitness center; and numerous outreach programs, including a 24-hour-a-day transportation service that has eliminated obstacles to getting to work on time every day.

Resident Relations Department

Developed in 1986, this department of the City of Omaha helps create a healthy and positive relationship between OHA staff and residents. In addition to administering the OHA's educational programs, staff members work closely with resident organizations and serve as vital links among residents, OHA programs, and Omaha-area community service agencies and organizations.

Linkages Program

Facilitates cooperation among several state and local entities to provide a continuum of care that promotes independent living for OHA's elderly and disabled residents.

Family Self Sufficiency Program

This federally mandated effort provides public housing residents with the resources they need to leave public assistance. Full-time coordinators work with participants to secure childcare, transportation, vocational training, education, and employment. They guide and monitor participants' progress, and work with other agencies to secure supportive services.

FirstStep Program

This program addresses the high infant mortality rate and low birth weight among babies born to mothers in public housing. It provides parents and pregnant women with a host of counseling, medical, and social services. FirstStep's Young Father's Program provides counseling, parenting classes, and other support services to teenage fathers.

In addition, OHA has created a foundation that provides scholarships for residents to attend college, and offers savings bond for achievements reached by current students. Other examples of OHA's far-reaching programs are mentoring initiatives, youth leadership programs, athletics, community cleanups, after-school study centers, voter mobilization initiatives, and Omaha Police Department "overnighters," which offer youths an opportunity to get to know local police officers in a positive setting.

Through the Omaha Housing Authority's programs, management and residents have created programs that directly challenge the pessimism which plagues housing authorities across the country. These programs set an example of community building and service integration that can be applied to other public and non-public housing communities.

Joyce Beasley is Vice President of Resident and Community Services, Omaha Housing Authority, 4401 N. 21st Street, Omaha, NE 68110, 402/444-4214 (phone), 412/444-6047 (fax).

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"It's Not Enough to Provide Housing"

Enterprise Foundation Links Affordable Housing with Services

The nonprofit housing industry has been working to develop affordable housing for the past several years. Today, nonprofit housing organizations can be found in all 50 states, and have built and renovated thousands of homes and apartments in lower-income communities.

These entities are valuable allies to family support programs, and the affordable housing field is recognizing that housing can be a starting point for providing other kinds of support services to move residents towards economic self-sufficiency and to move their communities towards greater stability. The power of combining these two fields was recognized in federal legislation with the passage of the 1990 Family Self-Sufficiency Law, which recommended linking housing with other vital social supports.[1]

VISTA volunteers try to walk as a group in a five-day experiential training on leadership and team-building in Pottstown.

The Enterprise Foundation, based in Columbia, Maryland, has been a national leader in moving the affordable housing field toward comprehensive family support. A national, nonprofit housing and community development organization launched in 1982, the Enterprise Foundation seeks to ensure that all people in America have the opportunity for fit and affordable housing, and are provided the necessary services to move up and out of poverty into the mainstream of life.

Through a network of more than 550 nonprofit organizations in more than 150 locations, the Enterprise Foundation is helping to build a national movement to promote housing and community development. It has helped develop 61,000 new and renovated homes by raising and committing more than $1.7 billion in loans, grants, and equity investments. Through its job placement network, 26,000 hard-to-employ people have been placed in entry level jobs.

"It's not enough to provide housing," said founder James Rouse. "It's necessary to transform the neighborhoods themselves. We need to work with the schools to promote quality education." The foundation also emphasizes job-skill training and placement for adults, and community-organized programs to prevent and treat drug abuse. Before his death, Rouse also was responsible for revitalizing depressed inner-city areas with "festival market places," and initiating activities to promote interracial harmony in Columbia.

Enterprise Foundation

Maria Chavez and her sons, Vincente and Miguel, peer through the window of their prospective home as her husband, Juan, speaks with Steve Brugger, Executive Director of the Tierra Contenta Corporation.

Students vie to answer a question posed by teacher Martha Winston in a school that is one of three undergoing transformation in the Sandtown-Winchester neighborhood of Baltimore, Maryland.

As a national intermediary, the Enterprise Foundation and its related organizations make financial resources available; provide technical assistance and training in affordable housing and community services; create and preserve quality housing and services; and provide research and information on model program and efforts.

For more information, contact the Enterprise Foundation, 10227 Wincopin Circle, Suite 500, Columbia, MD 21044, 410/964-1230 (phone), 410/964-1918 (fax).

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Planning and Collaboration Fuel County-Wide Success

The Fremont County Family Center

by Katherine Bair

The Fremont County Family Center in Cañon City, Colorado, is nationally recognized as a leader in the development of family-centered prevention and support services. A full-service family resource center, the program's real claim to fame is its creation and development of a plan for efficient delivery of services and wise use of resources county-wide. The plan has succeeded through cooperation among 40,000 community members, practitioners, and others in Fremont County, 100 miles south of Denver.

Fremont County Family Center's primary prevention services offer universal access and comprehensive support to all Fremont County families. Counseling, parenting skills, play groups for children and parents, a telephone parenting line, homeless prevention, respite care for families with special-needs children, family literacy, and school readiness programs are just a few of the many services.

Currently funded by state and local grants, it began in 1992 as one of eight family centers funded through a grant from Colorado Governor Roy Romer's office. As part of the original grant, each center was asked to develop a plan to become self-sustaining in the long-term funding of prevention programs. An advisory council, comprised of parents, local and state service agencies, law enforcement organizations, government and business leaders, the two primary county school districts, and community leaders together developed a plan to help implement a more predictable, self-sustaining financial picture for critical Family Center programs.

Through extensive community assessment studies, the team identified two basic needs: an affordable housing complex and a center with a comfortable family atmosphere where prevention programs could easily be accessed. They searched for a vehicle that the whole community would use and support. The team agreed that if it could locate the Family Center in a recreation area with an indoor pool, it wouldn't have the feel of a formal service agency. Then it would be more likely to draw families from all segments of the community, and even become a focal point for community activities.

This visionary, collaborative thinking led to the construction of a 52-unit, moderate- to low-rent housing complex on five acres of land provided by the Cañon City School District. The $4.1 million project was leveraged with federal tax credits and state grants. The complex features three-bedroom apartments with one level or townhouse-style floor plans. The apartments have appliances, evaporative cooling, window coverings, carpeting, and cable television access. Attractive landscaping and greenbelt areas surround the buildings, which are located just minutes from businesses, shopping, parks, restaurants and schools. Construction of the facility with an indoor swimming pool and other recreational amenities is scheduled to begin in the near future. The occupancy rate is at 100 percent and rental fees for the units vary.

The revenue generated from the housing development complex is projected to be $100,000 per year and is expected to be a reliable source of income for the continued operation of other Family Center programs. Halfway between an agency and a community site, the Center offers primary prevention programs at no cost to all families in Fremont County. Its mission is to serve all families through continued community collaboration. Other programs include a general education diploma program, an in-depth resource bank, a literacy program, a childhood health records plan, school development screening services, mental health services, nutritional programs, immunizations, and financial counseling. Community response to the programs has been impressive.

The Fremont Schools Facilities Corporation and the National Development Council oversee the housing complex through a limited partnership agreement and collaborate with the Family Center Governing Board. The Fremont Schools Facilities Corporation is guided by a seven member board of directors, of whom four are appointed by the Cañon City Board of Education and three by the Family Center Governing Board. In all other respects, it functions independently.

"The Cañon City School District provides strong, committed support to the Family Center because the programs and services directly impact our educational goals," emphasizes Frank Cooper, Cañon City Schools Superintendent. He adds that school districts everywhere are becoming overwhelmed by the number of children with physical, emotional and intellectual problems that schools cannot easily address. Waiting until children are in school to recognize these family-centered problems is inefficient and has a definite negative impact on the educational process. "To be successful, we must support child development from the moment of birth because early family and environmental experiences have a profound impact on a child's leaning and social development," says Cooper. "Early intervention often determines the course between becoming an accomplished student or one that remains at risk."

The collaboration shows that the foundation of any joint venture is understanding the needs of children and their families and then moving to integrate and implement the best resources. It means taking the initiative and demonstrating a sense of urgency to meet those needs. The community has realized that the success of the Family Center programs depends on reliable, on-going financial support.

Fresh. Bold. A creative interagency voice of hope and strength. The story of the Fremont County Family Center is one of committed individuals working together to meet the needs of the community.

Katherine Bair is Director of the Fremont County Family Center, 1401 Oak Creek Grade Road, Cañon City, CO 81212, 719/ 269-1523.

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What's Behind Different Approaches to Community Building?

A Brief Summary of Theories

By Joan Walsh

Community building reconciles two conflicts that have thwarted progress in poverty issues for at least two decades: one over the causes of urban unemployment, and another over the differences between strategies to overcome poverty.

The Sources of Urban Unemployment

While liberals blame urban poverty on deindustrialization, structural unemployment, and racial and class discrimination, conservatives emphasize family dysfunction and individual misbehavior. Put simply, one side argues that the problem is a lack of jobs while the other insists that although jobs exist, poor people are unready or unwilling to take them.

Community builders know that each analysis contains some truth. It is no easy matter to find employment for large numbers of the urban poor. William Julius Wilson and others have documented well the toll that deindustrialization is taking on African Americans, who make up just one-tenth of the American workforce but comprise one third of the workers who have lost manufacturing jobs since 1960. There is clearly a spatial and skills mismatch between existing jobs and the unemployed: as cities have become centers of finance and technology employing mainly the college-educated, less skill-intensive service, retail, and even manufacturing jobs have proliferated in the suburbs and beyond, out of reach for the urban poor.

At the same time, lack of childcare, poor education, social isolation, and self-destructive behaviors have prevented many of the unemployed from finding and holding available jobs that could improve their lives. The best community-building projects try to reckon with both realities by developing innovative, supportive pathways between the poor and existing job markets along with strategies to create paid work opportunities where they are needed. These projects increase potential workers' readiness and "willingness" to take jobs by increasing the accessibility of jobs to them.

Merging Different Strategies

The second conflict that the community building approach tries to overcome is the one between "people" and "place" strategies. Since the 1960s, the field of antipoverty work has been divided between the "people" strategists—who endorse a human services approach focused on the education, family support, and health-care needs of the poor—and the "place" strategists—who emphasize rebuilding neighborhoods and focus more on housing, retail development, and job creation than on human capital.

One side argues that the problem is a lack of jobs while the other insists that although jobs exist, poor people are unready or unwilling to take them. The best community-building projects increase potential workers' readiness and "willingness" to take jobs by increasing the accessibility of jobs to them.

The clash between these camps was drawn starkly by writer Nicholas Lemann, a partisan of "people" strategies, in a 1994 critique of community development in *The New York Times Magazine*. Attacking the Clinton administration's Empowerment Zone project, Lemann argued that attempts to attract jobs to poor neighborhoods make no sense, since such areas have always been mere way stations where poor people could improve their lots before moving on to better lives elsewhere. The goal of urban poverty policy, Lemann argued, should be to improve schools and services to help people get jobs that let them leave poor neighborhoods.

Community builders combine the "people" strategies that Lemann backs with a pragmatic attention to "place," reasoning that poor people can't take advantage of even the best uplift programs if they attend bad schools and live in dangerous neighborhoods and crumbling housing. They realize that most neighborhoods in which they work probably will continue to be poor—places where unemployed people, new immigrants, economic refugees from elsewhere in the United States, women leaving marriages, and young people starting out can find a foothold.

Therefore, rather than lobby for massive new industry in the inner city or for enormous public jobs programs, they offer an array of innovative strategies to connect the urban poor to mainstream labor markets. But they also know "people" strategies can't work without some focus on place: both strategies are needed to keep blighted housing, bad schools, and rampant crime from preventing poor urban residents from bettering their lives.

Note

This article is excerpted from *Stories of Renewal: Community Building and the Future of Urban America*, published by the Rockefeller Foundation.

Community Building in Practice

The National Community Building Network

In 1993, the National Community Building Network (NCBN) was formed by several foundations as a way of coordinating the efforts of a broad range of family-serving professionals (including community-based program providers, researchers, funders and others) and as a vehicle for shaping federal, state, and local policy.

NCBN is part of a nationwide movement to expand the roles of human services providers and those working to promote community economic development in order to improve outcomes for children, youths, families, and communities. Many social service providers are seeing that in a depressed local economy, their efforts be inadequate in meeting community needs—that they may foster dependence, not empowerment. And those working to produce economic growth in neighborhoods are learning that unless families are supported in taking part in that growth—through job training and other opportunities—they may in fact be displaced by it.

NCBN's philosophy is summarized in eight principles:

- **Integrate community development and human service strategies.**
  Traditional anti-poverty efforts have separated "bricks-and-mortar" projects from those that help families and develop human capital; each approach needs the other in order to be successful.

- **Forge partnerships through collaboration.**
  Building community requires work by all sectors—local residents, community-based organizations, businesses, schools, religious institutions, and health and social service agencies—in an atmosphere of trust, cooperation, and respect. It takes time and committed work to make such collaboration more than rhetoric.

- **Build on community strengths.**
  Past efforts to improve urban life have too often addressed community deficits; community-building efforts build on local capacities and assets.

- **Start from local conditions.**
  There is no cookie-cutter approach to building community; the best efforts flow from and adapt to local realities.

- **Foster broad community participation.**
  Many urban programs have become professionalized and alienated from the people they serve; new programs and policies must be shaped by community residents.

- **Require racial equity.**
  Racism remains a barrier to a fair distribution of resources and opportunities in our society; community building promotes equity for all groups.

- **Value cultural strengths.**
  Community building efforts promote the values and history of many cultural traditions and ethnic groups.

- **Support families and children.**
  Strong families are the cornerstone of strong communities; community-building efforts help families help themselves.

Community building is not a programmatic format as much as it is a framework for addressing inter-related troubles—poor schooling, crime, bad health, unemployment and underemployment, family instability—that snare people living in chronic urban poverty.

Through community building, urban improvement is not pursued on one front, by only housing or providing job training or reforming schools, for example, but instead encompasses and coordinates efforts to improve the physical, social, and economic conditions of impoverished neighborhoods.

While community building may involve starting some new local institutions, it also means working with and strengthening the families, schools, businesses, religious organizations, civic groups and government agencies that already exist in low-income communities.

Most importantly, community building recognizes that persistent urban poverty is not just about money, but about relationships as well. People living in chronic poverty lack not only income, but beneficial relationships with the people and the institutions that can help them to improve their lives.

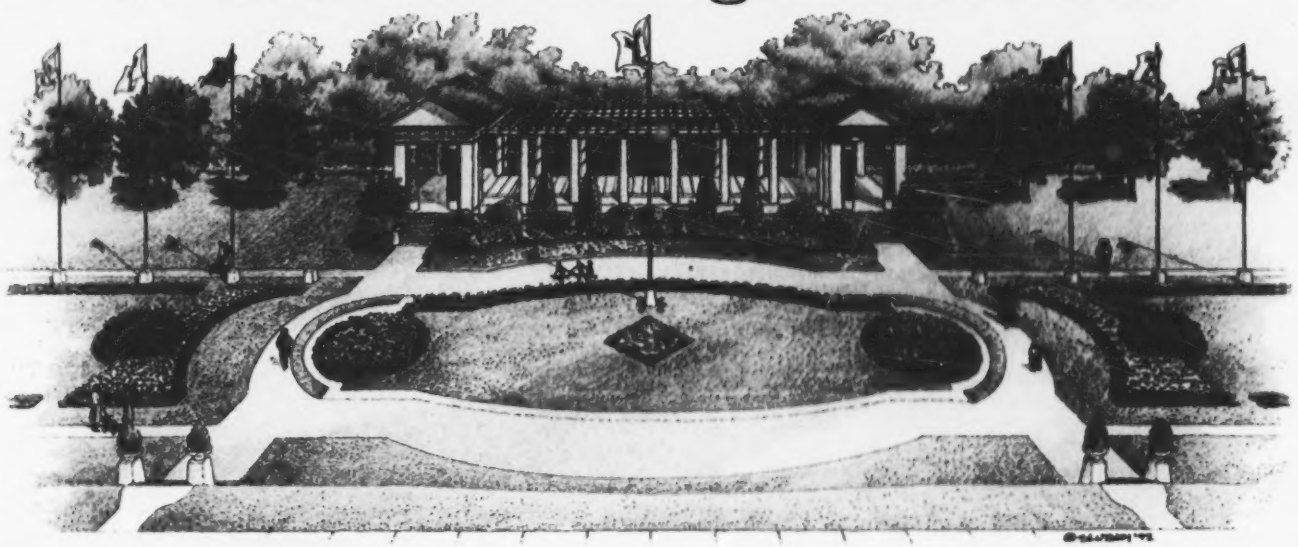
A Way to Merge Different Fields

NCBN has brought together many policymakers, staff of government agencies, and people involved in community-based organizations. The organization's work currently centers on federal, state, and local policy work. In each community, NCBN is working to build a common understanding among residents, government agencies, service providers, and community-based organizations as to the strengths and needs of the community. It also is working to establish a shared sense of ownership of the planning, implementation, and governing processes among stakeholders, and to create flexible, non-categorical funding.

NCBN's current thrust in promoting positive outcomes for all families is to advocate for government policies and procedures that foster service integration by encouraging innovation and problem solving. NCBN's current community-building strategy also involves creating strong leadership opportunities for individuals and families, and building the capacity building of local organizations in programmatic areas.

For more information, contact NCBN c/o Urban Strategies Council, 672 13th St., Oakland, CA 94612, 510/893-2404 (phone), 510/893-6657 (fax), network@ncbn.org (e-mail), http://www.ncbn.org (web page).

Homan Square: Community Building in Action on Chicago's West Side



The Homan Square development is community building in action. Now, residents of the North Lawndale community on Chicago's west side can find housing to suit virtually any income level and family size, along with comprehensive family support and primary health care services. In the near future, the community will be completed with the addition of a community center, a police department serving Homan Square and many surrounding neighborhoods, and businesses such as a major grocery store and multi-screen movie theater.

Currently, Family Focus Lawndale and a primary care center operated by Rush Presbyterian Medical Center provide residents with services. Family Focus, which has three Chicago-area locations, was founded by FRCA founder Bernice Weissbourd. The center offers parenting education, childcare, family literacy activities, information and referrals, parent support and discussion groups, life skills training, drop-in services, primary prevention services for youths, recreational activities, and general advocacy.

The vision for Homan Square includes: up to 600 units of owner-occupied and rental housing units (houses, townhouses, and apartments), businesses and employment opportunities (in fields such as health care, construction, biomedical technology, light industry, and childcare), and community services (such as family support services, financial counseling, job training, support for fledgling businesses owners, and advocacy on housing issues).

Countering a Negative Housing Trend

In keeping with larger trends, since 1960, North Lawndale has lost more than 60 percent of its previous population and over half of its housing. A major thrust of Homan Square is to counter that trend by promoting home ownership. In its first phase, housing construction was subsidized by New Homes of Chicago, an initiative of the Chicago Department of Housing. Home owners were then able to purchase the homes for under market value—less than $100,000.

Since the initial base of home owners was established, housing in subsequent phases all has been sold at market value. Homes are owned by 70 families, and another 50 families rent apartments at reasonable rates. A final phase of housing construction will add 114 rental apartments and townhomes, and 40 houses, probably by the end of the year 2001. Nearly one-fourth of each block consists of play areas and common green space.

To attract even more families, the development will progress during phases two and three with increased services for families as well as the integration of businesses, which already are being attracted to the area by the growing resident base. Homan Square includes more than one million square feet that will be devoted to institutional and commercial space, upgraded and converted for office and industrial use to create more jobs.

The area is well situated to create a complete, revitalized community in which families can find what they need. West Lawndale includes a variety of schools, churches, and parks; the addition of more family-oriented services and businesses, as well as affordable housing, will complete the equation.

The project was sparked by the donation of 55 acres of real estate by Sears, Roebuck and Co. after the company moved its headquarters into Chicago's main business district. The Shaw Company, a real estate development company that has built affordable housing in the neighboring Austin community, is in charge of development; it has vowed that "not a single person or a single house will be displaced" in the realization of this vision of a revitalized North Lawndale.

For more information, contact Homan Square Management, 3333 W. Arthington, Ste. 120, Chicago, IL 60624, 773/265-5195 (phone), 773/265-5197 (fax).

RESOURCE FILE

National Community Economic Development Organizations

This resource file is a starting point for finding additional information, publications, and assistance in the area of community economic development. It is not a comprehensive list. To be added to FRCA's data base, please contact FRCA at 20 N. Wacker Drive, Suite 1100, Chicago, IL 60606.

Association for Enterprise Opportunity
70 East Lake Street
Suite 620
Chicago, IL 60601-5907
312/357-0177
FAX 312/357-0180
Member-based national trade association for more than 500 microenterprise development organizations serving thousands of economically disadvantaged entrepreneurs across the country. Provides a forum, information, and a voice to promote enterprise opportunity for people and communities with limited access to economic resources. Represents U.S. microenterprise agenda in the growing international community. Membership open to practitioners, individuals, public agencies, funders, and others who share its mission.

Center for Community Change
160 Sansome Street
7th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94104
415/982-0346
FAX 415/956-6880
Helps develop the power and capacity of low-income people to change their communities for the better through technical assistance to a wide range of organizations representing low-income individuals.

Center for Community Development
University of Delaware
Graham Hall
Newark, DE 19716-3587
302/831-6780
FAX 302/831-3587
Provides training and technical assistance to government agencies and nonprofit and community-based organizations in housing and community development; neighborhood and community planning; design, implementation, and evaluation of social service programs; nonprofit agency management; organizational strategic planning; and programmatic strategic analysis.

Center for Community Futures Elmwood Station
P.O. Box 5309
Berkeley, CA 94705
510/339-3801
FAX 510/339-3803
Consulting and training group that assists agencies and associations in achieving their goals and inventing the future.

Center for Urban Economic Development
University of Illinois
815 W.Van Buren, #500
Chicago, IL 60680
312/996-6336
FAX 312/996-5766
Provides technical assistance, policy analysis, and research in economic development for community organization and local governments.

Community Asset Builders
3450 Geary Boulevard
Suite 203
San Francisco, CA 94118
415/731-7270
FAX 415/731-3489
Develops/manages projects that provide experienced professionals in commercial real estate, affordable housing development, incubators and business development programs.

Community Economic Development Program
New Hampshire College
2500 N. River Road
Manchester, NH 03106
630/644-3103
Enables practitioners from the U.S. and worldwide to work together to apply economic principles for building sustainable, socially concerned programs that bring community empowerment.

The Enterprise Foundation
505 American City Building
Columbia, MD 21044
410/964-1230
FAX 410/964-1918
Works to ensure that all low-income families in America have the opportunity for fit and affordable housing within a generation, and to work themselves up and out of poverty.

Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)
1055 Wilshire Boulevard
Suite 1600
Los Angeles, CA 90017
213/250-9550
FAX 213/250-9889
Assists community development corporations with financial resources and technical assistance in their efforts to transform distressed neighborhoods into healthy communities.

National Association of Community Development Loan Funds
924 Cherry Street, 2nd Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19107-2411
215/923-4754
FAX 215/923-4755
National membership organization for established non-profit community development financial institutions that demonstrate a commitment to the shared core values of serving low-income communities, achieving high performance levels in lending, management, governance, and growth, and advocating on behalf of their communities for financial system reform to increase the flow of capital to distressed and disinvested communities.

National Congress for Community Economic Development
11 Dupont Circle
Suite 325
Washington, DC 20036
202/234-5009
FAX 202/234-4510
Promotes, supports, and advocates for the community-based development industry and works to ensure that the resources required for assisting these communities are identified and distributed to help families and individuals achieve lasting economic viability. Membership organization. Provides public policy education, research and special projects, newsletters, publications, training, professional conferences, fund-raising, and technical assistance.

National Federation of Community Development Credit Unions
120 Wall Street
10th Floor
New York, NY 10005
212/809-1850
FAX 212/809-3274
Represents credit unions serving low-income communities by providing advocacy, assistance in raising capital, training and technical assistance, organizing assistance, and publications and research.

National Housing & Community Development Law Project
2201 Broadway
Suite 815
Oakland, CA 94612
510/251-2600
FAX 510/251-0600
Provides legal, management, planning, training, and business assistance to community development corporations, community-based organizations, units of local and state governments, foundations and corporations, regional and national technical assistance providers, Native American tribes, and neighborhood groups. Emphasis on local initiatives and local resource development to create stronger partnerships between community organizations, foundations, and local governments.

Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation
1325 G Street, NW
Suite 800
Washington, DC 20005
202/376-2642
FAX 202/376-2168
Works to revitalize declining lower-income communities and provide affordable housing for current residents through the development and support of local resident-led partnerships that include business leaders and local government officials. Provides training and technical assistance to help each local partnership establish goals and develop strategies

Pratt Institute, Center for Community and Environmental Development
379 DeKalb Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11205
718/636-3486
FAX 718/636-3709
Equips low- and moderate-income communities with the resources to develop progressive solutions to the physical, social and economic challenges facing them

The following organizations also can provide information and assistance:

Committee for Economic Development
477 Madison Avenue
New York, NY 10022
212/688-2063
FAX 212/758-9068

Community Development Financial Institutions Coalition
924 Cherry Street
Third Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19107
215/923-5363

National Association of Community Development Loan Funds
92 Cherry Street
Philadelphia, PA 19107
215/923-4754

National Congress for Community Economic Development
11 Dupont Circle
Suite 325
Washington, DC 20036
202/234-5009

National Federation of Community Development Credit Unions
120 Wall Street
10th Floor
New York, NY 10005
212/809-1850

National Housing & Community Development Law Project
2201 Broadway
Suite 815
Oakland, CA 94612
510/251-2600
FAX 510/251-0600

Shorebank Advisory Services, Inc.
1950 E. 71st Street
Chicago, IL 60649-2096
773/288-0066
FAX 773/493-6609

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Cornell University, NY

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Center for Collaboration for Children, CSU, CA

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Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, OR

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Cancer Research Foundation,

Bea Romer
First Lady of Colorado, CO

Anne L. Tuohy
Glenview, IL

Khatib Waheed
Caring Communities Program, MO

Sylvia Yee
Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund, CA

Ruth Zambrana
George Mason University, DC

FAMILY RESOURCE COALITION OF AMERICA

20 NORTH
WACKER DRIVE
SUITE 1100
CHICAGO, IL 60606

312/338-0900
FAX: 312/338-1522

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